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# EUROPEAN COLONIES,

IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD,

VIEWED IN THEIR

SOCIAL, MORAL, AND PHYSICAL CONDITION.

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# TO THE READER.

THE object of this work is to communicate a vivid and accurate idea of those general impressions which a visit to the respective colonies comprehended in it, is calculated to produce in the mind of a disinterested observer. All political, commercial, and statistical details have been avoided, and nature and human life, conjoined with a few historical notices, are the subjects to which the author has exclusively devoted his pages. His idea has been to introduce the reader to a knowledge of each colony, by presenting to his view its features and character in that succession which would meet his eye and his observation, were he to visit it personally. Each division of the work comprises four similar and consistent parts. The first of these describes the ocean which

must be traversed in proceeding to the country whose designation it bears; the second gives a picture of the scenery and physical objects which are calculated first to strike the attention of a stranger arriving there; the third delineates the general character of the aboriginal inhabitants; and the fourth embraces the progress of European settlement in the colony, and the existing manners, condition, and habits of thought, of its foreign residents.

The author having resided and travelled in nearly all the colonies and settlements which he professes to describe, and also sailed upon their respective oceans, the facts and opinions contained in this work are derived as much from personal observation as from the authority of others.

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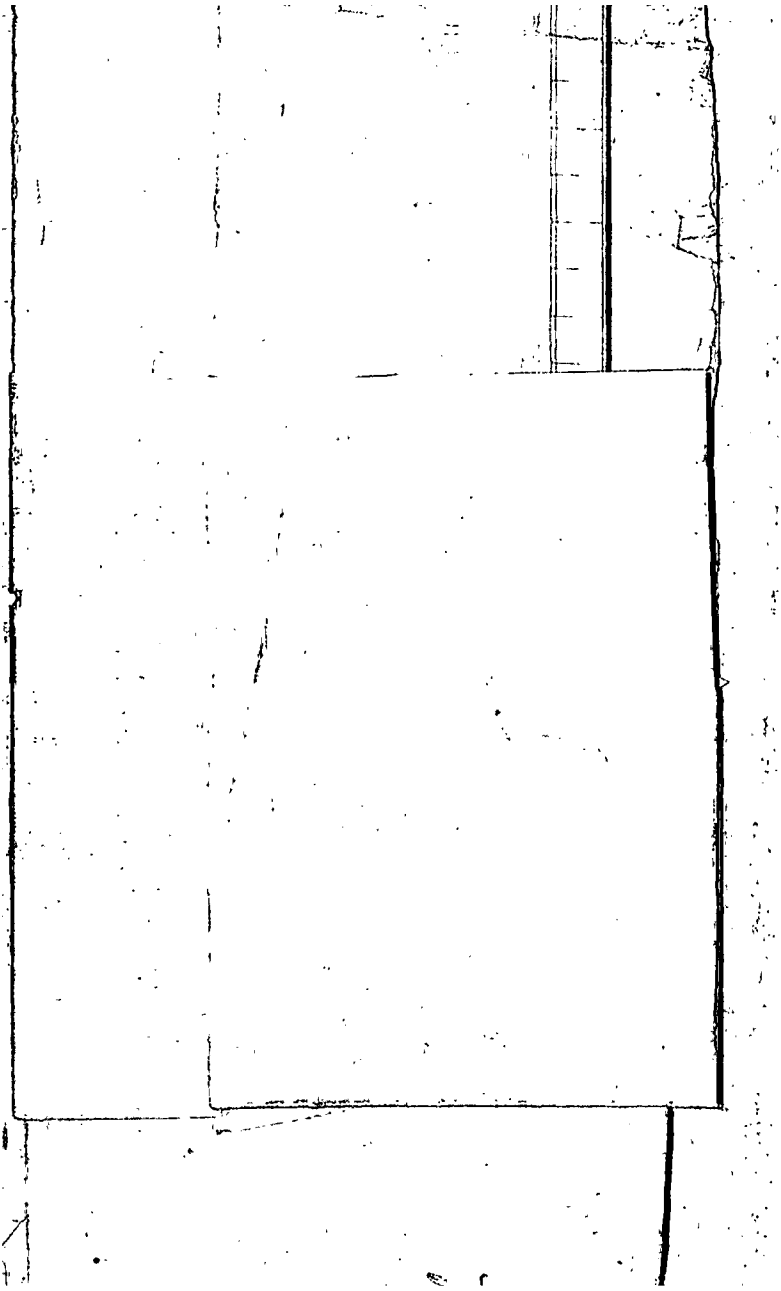

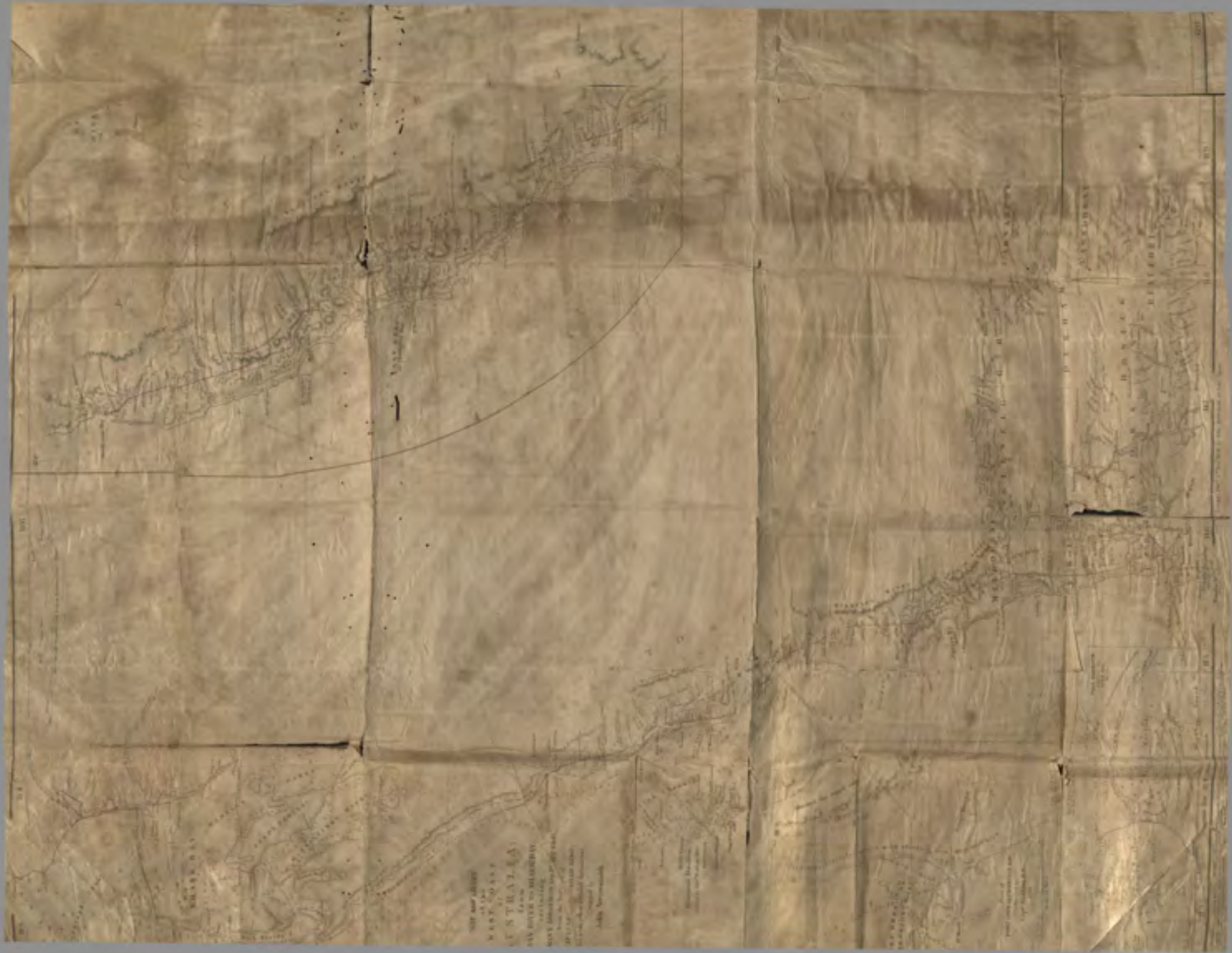

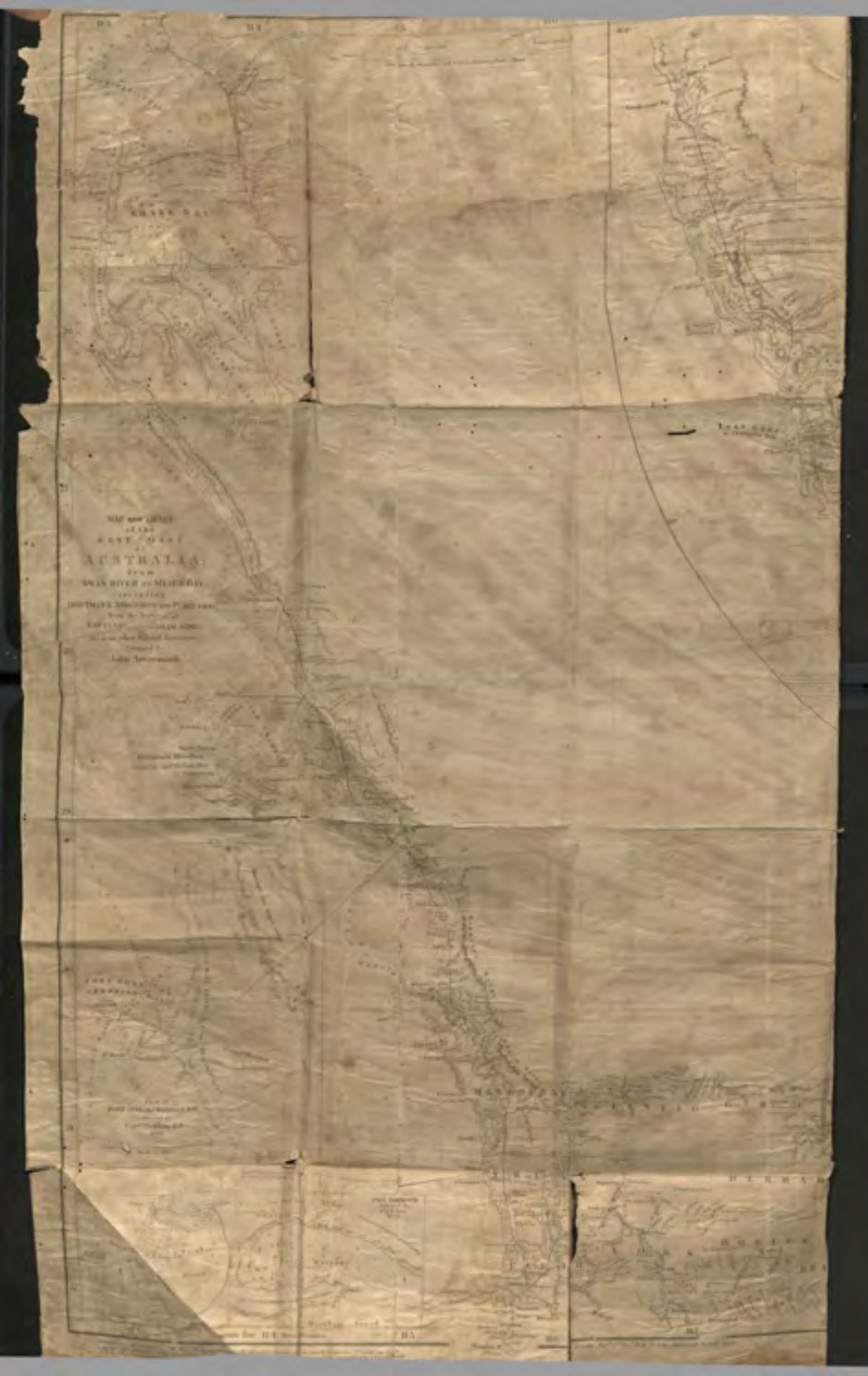

# THE COLONIES.

## WEST AFRICA.

### THE WEST AFRICAN OCEAN.

NOTHING appears at first view more unaccountable than the slow progress of nautical discovery. How was it that nations so enterprising, powerful, and enlightened, as the Greeks, the Romans, and the Carthaginians, never attempted to carry their navigation beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, or even to explore the north-west coast of Africa, except in two instances? Why did not Ptolemy Lagus, when he ruled over Egypt, and carried on an extensive trade with India by way of the Red Sea, never think of sending a ship to circumnavigate Africa? How did it happen that neither Pythagoras, nor Eratosthenes, nor any

other of the ancient geographers and astronomers, ever proposed to their countrymen, or to their respective sovereigns, that a voyage of discovery should be made in order to settle their doubts and perplexities in reference to the form of the earth, its productions, and the extent of its habitableness? Had Aristotle suggested a scheme of the kind to Alexander the Great, that conqueror, who loved everything new and imaginative, would doubtless have been pleased with the proposal, and have taken measures for its execution. If we consider the turn of genius of the Macedonian hero, and the grandness of his commercial views respecting Alexandria, we may safely presume that, had he lived a little longer, and settled his affairs in the East, he would have directed his attention to maritime discovery, and pursued the track which was afterwards followed by the Portuguese in the middle of the fourteenth century.

It is vain to reply to the above questions by saying that the vessels of the ancients were not calculated for long voyages. If they could traverse the Mediterranean and the Euxine, they might at least have coasted Africa without any difficulty as far as latitude 20° south; but we have something quite conclu-

upon the subject, if we regard as authentic the Periplus of Hanno, according to which, Hanno set sail from Carthage, in command of a fleet equipped for the purpose of founding a colony on the north-west coast of Africa. The expedition consisted of sixty ships, and thirty thousand individuals, men, women, and children, which allows five hundred persons to each ship, supposing that these were all of the same size; and this must have been, at the lowest calculation, four hundred tons burthen, without making allowance for the stowage of any considerable quantity of provisions, the supply of which was so scanty, that it failed when the fleet reached Cape Non, and caused it to return to Carthage, without having effected the object for which it was designed.

If the ancients possessed ships of four hundred tons burthen, they could easily have made longer voyages than they ever attempted to do, and we must therefore attribute their backwardness in maritime discovery to other causes than the want of the means of engaging in it. All the ancient republics were so much wrapped up in themselves, and so exclusively engrossed with their own local affairs, that they could not spare even a passing regard for any-

thing else. When Themistocles proposed to the Athenians, that the produce of the mines of Laurentium should be employed in building and equipping a hostile fleet, instead of being distributed amongst the citizens, as had formerly been done, he was heard with applause, and he carried his point; but had Plato or any other philosopher asked a donation in aid of maritime discovery, he would have been laughed at by the people, and perhaps condemned to banishment by the senate for endeavouring to apply the public money to corrupt uses. Egotism was the ruling influence at Athens, and every one there was taught to undervalue or despise all things that were not to be found in his native land. To men of this character, the discovery and knowledge of foreign countries could present nothing attractive; and many of them would perhaps have been alarmed at any idea of the kind, lest some distant region of the world should be found to contain a nation surpassing them in arts and arms, and too far advanced in civilization to require their instructions, or to condescend either to admire their manners or to imitate their institutions.

Columbus was nine years soliciting assistance from different governments to enable him to

undertake the discovery of America, and this has been considered reproachful to Europe; but had he lived in ancient times, it is likely that his applications to the Greeks, Romans, and Carthaginians on such a subject, would have been still more unsuccessful, though these states then enjoyed a much higher grade of civilization than Europe had any pretensions to at the end of the fifteenth century.

It was in 1418 that the Portuguese first began to venture upon the West African Ocean, under the auspices of the celebrated Prince Henry. But these expeditions were entirely of a coasting nature, and were conducted with much caution and timidity, for Cape Verde was not attained till seventeen years after the discoveries had commenced; and it was not till 1471 that the equator was first crossed by Jean de Santarem, who upon this occasion proceeded as far as Cape St. Catherine, in south latitude 2° 30′.

The accounts which we have of these early voyages are much less in detail than could be wished, for they give us no idea of the impressions created in the minds of the navigators by the new aspect which nature assumes in the tropical seas, whether in relation to meteorology or

to the animal kingdom. Many of them did not advance so far as their royal employer expected, alarmed, doubtless, by the occurrence of new and inexplicable phenomena. As they sailed southward, and felt the temperature increase, they would consider that they were fast approaching those regions which, according to the common opinion, were uninhabitable on account of heat. When the harmattan blew, and dimmed the air with particles of sand; when unperceived currents carried the ship far out of her reckoning; when on a calm night the surface of the ocean appeared on fire; when waterspouts, as if impelled by supernatural power, advanced with horrid roarings towards the vessel; and when the thunder, lightning, rain, and typhoons of the torrid zone raged in concert, the inexperienced navigator might well lose courage, and think that nature was conspiring to oppose his progress, and that it was time for him to retrace his way homewards.

The West African Ocean is comparatively seldom visited by tempests, and when these do occur, they are never of long duration. On the other hand, violent shifting squalls are very common, often arising unexpectedly, and continuing for an hour or two, when heavy rain

puts a stop to them and lulls the sea. Thunder and lightning occur almost daily in the neighbourhood of the coast; and the meteor called St. Helen's fire, is frequently seen at a ship's mast-head, in the form of a whitish lengthened flame, or of a globe of fire. The generality of sailors regard it as portending good weather, or the reverse, according to their humour at the time; but Catholics usually attribute the phenomenon to the agency of some saint. Magellan, when sailing in the West African Ocean in 1519, was particularly favoured in this way, according to his historian Pigafetta. "In stormy weather," says he, "we frequently saw what is called the Corpo Santo, or St. Elme. One very dark night it appeared to us like a brilliant flambeau on the summit of a large tree, and thus remained for the space of two hours, which was a matter of great consolation to us during the tempest. At the instant of its disappearing, it diffused such a resplendent light as almost blinded us. We gave ourselves up for lost, but the wind ceased momentaneously."

The early navigators were accustomed to regard with superstitious dread the long calms which they frequently experienced in the West

African Ocean, and particularly in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Guinea. They found these to be very different in character and duration from anything of the kind that ever took place in the northern oceans, where the air is always slightly agitated even in the calmest weather, and where the sea never ceases to undulate with a gentle swell, and to present a surface more or less rippled. But within the torrid zone the atmosphere will sometimes remain stagnant during ten or twelve days in succession; and the ocean, becoming smooth as a mirror, reflects the blaze of the sun with intolerable fervour. Sharks then appear, and sport round the sides of the motionless ship—snakes rise from the deep, and showing themselves for a moment, descend again—the porpoise makes long circuits, spouting water, and panting and breathing like a human being—and the whale afar off raises his mountainous back above the surface of the sea. The thunder rolls heavily overhead, the masts and timbers of the vessel are heard cracking, and there seems to be no help or hope for man. Individuals placed in a situation of this kind for the first time, and ignorant whether the climate obeyed those laws which prevailed elsewhere, would be

likely to view everything through a distorted medium, and to give a colouring of the miraculous to circumstances in reality no way out of the common course of nature.

The waterspout may be considered the most appalling phenomenon that appears in the equatorial seas; and it is of more frequent occurrence, and attains greater magnitude, on the west coast of Africa, than in any other part of the ocean. It does not always show itself under the same form, and on some occasions it is stationary, while on others it moves forward with varying rapidity. When a waterspout is about to be produced, the sea, however smooth it may previously have been, acquires a violent degree of agitation at a particular spot, and soon begins to foam and boil up with a whirling and dashing noise. Presently a funnel-shaped tube is observed to descend from the clouds, which always hang very low at such a time, and to direct itself towards the turbulent waters, as if to form a junction with them. This it sometimes does, or rather appears to do, instantaneously, but more commonly not. Meanwhile the agitation of the sea increases, the tube grows larger, and the superincumbent cloud descends to a lower level; and at length

all these parts unite, and form a pillar of water fifty or sixty feet high, the base of which rests upon the sea, while its top penetrates the overhanging clouds, and is totally concealed by them. This pillar perhaps continues stationary for a few moments, and then disappears; but in other instances it advances steadily in one direction, and threatens destruction to any ship that may lie in its course; for the weather being always perfectly calm upon such occasions, the mariners cannot move out of its way. They must therefore endeavour to destroy the object of their fears before it reaches the vessel, which they often successfully do by firing guns, the sudden vibration thus produced in the air destroying the equilibrium of the column of water, which then falls down and mingles with the sea. Should the waterspout continue to advance in defiance of artillery, the seamen seek to provide for their safety by going below decks, and closing the hatches: nor is their situation here so dangerous as might be supposed, unless their vessel happen to be of very small tonnage; for I am inclined to believe that no waterspout ever strikes a large ship under any circumstances whatever, because, as soon as it comes within a certain distance of such

an object, it must feel the influence of that attraction of gravitation which all large bodies exert upon each other, and, losing its balance and stability, will no longer be able to sustain itself in that columnar form and upright position which are essential to its existence.

The formation of waterspouts is ascribed by some writers to the action of a whirlwind produced by the meeting of two opposite winds; a theory that ill accords with the calm state of the atmosphere which is usually observed to prevail during the occurrence of these phenomena. It has also been asserted that the watery pillar, so formidable in appearance, is hollow, and consists entirely of the spray of the sea in a state of gyration, and that therefore the quantity of fluid composing it is too inconsiderable to do any damage to ships by falling upon them. We well know, however, that, when waterspouts suddenly disperse in the open sea, a loud noise is generally heard, like the dashing of a cascade, which seems to indicate that they have more bulk and solidity than the above opinion would allow.

The equator having been first crossed within the longitude of the West African Ocean, we are naturally led to look in that quarter for the

history and origin of the singular and nearly universal usage called Baptism by Neptune, with which mariners have from time immemorial been in the habit of signalizing their passage from one hemisphere to the other. But the whole subject is involved in the utmost obscurity. The Greeks used to throw gold cups and similar things into the ocean when they wished to propitiate its deity, and they would in general make libations to him when they sailed past any of his temples, which were usually built upon capes and promontories, in order that they might be visible to mariners at sea; and even in the present day it is customary with the Norwegian fishermen to perform certain religious or superstitious acts on passing particular straits and headlands where the navigation is considered intricate or dangerous. Nor would a fast or a thanksgiving be an unreasonable ceremony on crossing the equinoctial line; but the mode of celebrating that event which has long been practised by European mariners, so far from having anything devout in its character, is a compound of fantastic and unmeaning extravagances.

At first view we should be inclined to attribute the invention of the ceremony in question

to the Portuguese, who were the navigators that first passed the line, but there are two objections to our doing so. They were a religious people, at least externally; and priests almost always accompanied them in their early voyages of discovery, and celebrated the rites of the church and kept its festivals with as much regularity as circumstances would allow. Is it likely, then, that such men would permit the mariners, on crossing the equator, to indulge in profane mirth, and to do homage, even in jest, to one of the heathen deities, when the occasion seemed to demand thanksgivings for present safety, and invocations to the saints for deliverance from prospective dangers? It appears, too, that baptism, or some analogous ceremony, was practised in other parts of the ocean besides those lying under the equator; as on passing the tropic of Cancer, and the Straits of Gibraltar; so that the Portuguese, perhaps, only followed an ancient and established custom when they adopted the rite as often as they found themselves about to cross the equinoctial line.

Gemelli, in describing his voyage from Manilla to Acapulco, in the Spanish galleon, about the end of the seventeenth century, says,

that "the captain and the mariners, when they supposed themselves to be within one hundred leagues of the coast of California, began to look out for a certain kind of seaweed, the appearance of which indicates with certainty that land is not far off. No sooner was the seaweed discovered floating upon the waves, than the crew proceeded to the election of a mock court of judicature, called the Court of *Senas*, (or signs, because they had found the one required,) the object of which was to try the passengers for fictitious crimes laid to their charge by prepared accusers, and to condemn them to the payment of fines in punishment for the same. The sums of money levied in this way became a perquisite of the mariners; and no man was cited before the Court of Senas who had previously made the passage between Manilla and Acapulco."

In Jannequin's voyage to Africa, in 1639, it is mentioned that Henry the Fourth of France, passing through a dangerous channel called the Raz, between St. Malo and Rochelle, observed the sailors performing the rite of baptism upon one of their party. He asked upon what grounds the usage was established, and on being informed that its antiquity was so

great that no one knew its origin or meaning, he consented to submit to it himself. Were the authenticity of this anecdote ascertained, it would carry back the practice of the ceremony to at least a century before Jannequin's time. But, however this may be, it is impossible to doubt that the rite has been much corrupted since its first introduction, and that what is now a piece of burlesque, was once a serious pageant, implying perhaps more than met the eye.

There is no mention of nautical baptism in Magellan's voyage round the world, which took place in 1519 : the earliest notice which we have upon the subject is in the voyage of Alexis de St. Lo to Cape Verde, in 1635, when the ceremony took place under the tropic of Cancer. Jannequin, the writer above referred to, witnessed it in the same latitude four years afterwards. He says, that on such occasions, the pilot attires himself in a long robe, and, holding in his hands his book of charts, summons all those who have not before made the voyage, to appear before him. He then causes them to swear upon his book, that as often as they pass the same place they will perform the requisite and established ceremonies in the manner then observed. After

this, his assistant gives each of the novices a slight stroke on the back of the neck with the flat of a sword, and having demanded some presents, hands over the newly-initiated persons to the mariners, who force them to plunge their heads three times into a tub of water, and in addition to this, dash a few buckets-full over them, to complete their baptism.

A subsequent particular account of the ceremonies used in crossing the equator, is to be found in a voyage to Congo, by Angelo and Carli, in 1666. "They (the Portuguese) also observe this ancient custom," say our authors: "those who have never been under the line are obliged to give the sailors either a piece of money, or something to eat or drink, or at least money's worth, from which no man is excused, not even the Capuchins, of whom they take beads, Agnus Dei, and such like things, which being exposed to sale, what they yield is given to say masses for the souls in purgatory. If any man happen to be such a miser as to deny paying this duty, the sailors, clothed like officers, carry him bound to a tribunal, on which a seaman is seated in a long robe, who, acting the part of a judge, examines him, hears what he

has to say, and gives judgment against him to be thrice ducked in the sea."

It is to be observed that, in the above descriptions of nautical baptism, no allusion whatever is made to Neptune, and that the fines and donations which are in the present day exacted from novices on their crossing the equator, are not applied to any religious purpose, but are expended by the seamen in amusement and drinking. The introduction of the Grecian deity appears, then, to be a modern innovation, and probably was suggested by British mariners, with a view to give a character of humour and vivacity to an usage which had formerly been too grave and simple to excite their interest or please their taste.

One of the most remarkable features of the West African Ocean is that portion of it which is named Mar do Sargossa by the Portuguese, Krootza Zee by the Dutch, and Grassy Sea by the English. It extends between 18° and 30° north latitude, and 20° and 35° west longitude, and is often so completely overspread with a species of floating seaweed, that it resembles a field covered with brown vegetation; and the marine plants are in some places so strongly

and closely intertwined, that they slightly impede a ship's progress. This *fucus natans* consists of a series of nodules growing in bunches, and a good deal resembling cauliflower stripped of its leaves. They are of an olive or tawny colour, and float upon the surface of the sea in parallel lines, except during the prevalence of strong winds, when their arrangement is distorted, and their general distribution becomes irregular. In passing through the Mar do Sargossa in April 1833, I could discover only a few nodules of the weed, floating far apart; but as the north-east trade had been blowing fresh for several days previous, I was led to conclude that the great body of seaweed had been driven to the westward of our track, and had accumulated on the coast of South America.

Floating weed is found in nearly all parts of the ocean in greater or less quantities, but nowhere does it cover so vast an expanse of water as in the Grassy Sea; and naturalists have formed different opinions respecting the causes of its accumulation there. It is a common belief that the *fucus* in question is produced in the Gulf of Mexico, and carried from thence by the Florida stream between the Bermuda and Western Islands, and afterwards in a southerly

direction as far as the tropic of Cancer, or a few degrees within it. The objection to this opinion is, that seaweed produced in the Gulf of Mexico, and conveyed so great a distance, would arrive in a withered and decayed state; but this is so far from being the case in the present instance, that the *fucus* of the Mar do Sargossa is generally found to be fresh and flourishing, and it has even been remarked that it is the more so the farther it extends to the southward. The simplest mode of accounting for this accumulation of seaweed would be, to suppose that it grew in the bottom of the ocean in the latitudes in which it is always observed floating; but the vast depth of the sea there seems effectually to overturn this theory, for it is reasonable to believe that vegetation cannot take place many hundred feet below the surface, because of the overwhelming pressure of the superincumbent water. And it has been urged, in addition to this, that the marine plant in question being of a green or brown hue, it must necessarily grow in places accessible to light, otherwise it would be entirely colourless. However, the last argument has no validity; for Humboldt informs us that he drew up a piece of seaweed in the neighbourhood of the island of

Allegrava (one of the Canaries), which was "as green as our grass," though it had grown upon a piece of madrepore one hundred and ninety-two feet below the surface of the water, where it must have vegetated in darkness, or at least beyond the influence of any but a few straggling rays of refracted light.

I am inclined to believe that the seaweed of the Mar do Sargossa is actually produced upon the surface of the ocean, and at or near the place where it is found; and that the mature plants, when they shed their seed and decay, afford substance and soil for the vegetation of new ones. We well know that the smallest floating body is sufficiently substantial to admit of the growth of a *fucus* upon it, and we often meet with such plants immensely exceeding in bulk the material to which they are attached. A chip of wood, a cork, or a piece of rope, thrown into the sea, are soon covered with marine vegetation; and large ponds of water, and even lakes, are often found encrusted with mosses and gramina, whose roots are not attached to any extraneous substance, and which appear to vegetate entirely upon the *débris* of each other. The Mar do Sargossa, being little agitated by tempests or moved by

currents, is particularly favourable for this kind of parasitical vegetation. The flow of the Gulf stream ceases to be perceptible in north latitude 30°, and, on the other hand, the current that sweeps round the Cape of Good Hope loses its strength in south latitude 25°, so that the portion of sea intervening between these two parallels is as it were in a state of constant stagnation, because it is the boundary of a current alike to the north and to the south, and is imprisoned by continents to the eastward and westward.

While taking a survey of the West African Ocean, it is impossible to forget that it is reputed by many writers to have been the site of the celebrated Atlantis of Plato, which, according to them, was sunk by some convulsion of nature, such as an earthquake, or perhaps by an inundation caused by the sudden irruption of the Black Sea into the Mediterranean; which latter being thus prodigiously increased in magnitude, would force a passage for its redundant waters through the Straits of Gibraltar, and submerge the Atlantis Island, at that time lying not far from their western extremity. And do cities, palaces, and works of art really lie in the bottom of the West African seas? and will some

future effort of human ingenuity enable our posterity to discover and explore a submarine Herculaneum, perhaps more magnificent and extensive than the subterranean one which is as yet but imperfectly known to us?

The supporters of the above theory tell us that the Canaries, the Azores, and the Cape Verde Islands, are the tops of the mountain ranges of the submerged continent, which, according to this supposition, must have been united to Africa, or at least separated from it only by a narrow strait. But it is objected that all these groups of islands are decidedly of volcanic formation, while the neighbouring coast of Africa presents not the smallest appearance of the kind; and it is highly improbable, or perhaps nearly impossible, that two adjoining countries should have differed so essentially in their geological characters. Besides, the Atlantis is described by Plato as being a country of singular fertility, and in every respect highly favoured by nature; a description that is little applicable to a land of burning mountains.

If we examine the supposed remains of the submerged continent, we shall find nothing to settle our doubts or guide our opinions. The

Canary Islands, when revisited by Europeans in the fourteenth century, (for the Carthaginians discovered them,) were found to be inhabited by a race of people called Guanches, who are now extinct, with the exception of a few families in Teneriffe. The Guanches were a barbarous nation, unacquainted with arts and letters, clad in goatskins, and having no sort of arms but stakes and clubs, and divided into small tribes or principalities, the chiefs of which had various privileges, similar to what the nobles of Europe enjoyed in the feudal times. Their serfs cultivated barley, and reared large flocks of goats; and their houses were built of stone, without cement. They did not know the use of metals, and had no monuments of antiquity amongst them except mummies; it being their custom to preserve the bodies of their deceased relations by filling the different cavities with odoriferous herbs, and then wrapping the corpse in bandages of dried goatskin. But let us not regard the uncivilized state of the Guanches as a proof that they were not a remnant of the population of the submerged Atlantis. The sudden irruption of water which overwhelmed it would destroy most of its inhabitants; but a few would escape by taking

refuge in the mountains, where, stupified with terror and deprived of resources, they would wander about in disorganized communities, and rapidly sink into a state of barbarism. And how would they think of continuing to embalm their dead under such circumstances? Perhaps they had always followed the practice from superstitious ideas similar to those entertained by the ancient Egyptians; and believing that the future condition of the soul depended upon the preservation of the body, they would, in the hour of inundation, snatch up the corpses of their parents and relatives, and carry them along with them to the mountains, as an act of piety and moral duty, and the art and custom in question would thus be continued in use and remembrance amongst them.

Humboldt says that he was not so fortunate as to obtain a Guanches mummy at the Canary Islands, though he had seen several in Europe which were in a state of extraordinary desiccation, the whole body, including the bones, weighing much less than an ordinary skeleton. In Golberry's Voyage to the Coast of Africa in 1785, there is the following description of a Guanches mummy:—"It was five feet ten inches long from the heel to the top of the

cranium. The features were still distinguishable; the hair was long and black, and in good preservation, but it was very easily detached from the head; the jaw contained thirty-two teeth, so strongly fixed in their sockets, that they were with difficulty extracted even with the help of an instrument. The skin was in good preservation on all parts of the body, and dry and flexible, and of a deep brown hue. The back and breast were hairy, and the cavities of both were filled with masses of a certain kind of grain, which were white and light, and of nearly the size of a grain of rice. The mummy was bound up like an infant in swaddling clothes, in three turnings of tanned goatskin, rather more than three inches wide."

But the practice of embalming is not the only interesting usage of the ancient Guanches. We are told, that on the election of a new sovereign or chief, it was customary for many of them to sacrifice their lives in his honour, by throwing themselves down a precipice in presence of a multitude of spectators who applauded their devotion. Strange aberration of human reason! In various parts of the world we find a king's friends or followers voluntarily perishing with him when he dies, because he no longer has

any need of their services in this world, and may possibly have occasion for them in the next; but the subjects of a Guanche sovereign devoted themselves to death at the moment when he began most to require their assistance and support, and this too by way of proving the strength of their attachment to his royal person—a practice more repugnant to common sense and natural feeling than even the analagous one which existed amongst the Natchez Indians, who were wont to sacrifice their first-born children in honour of their chief, the Great Sun—for an infant is of less value to society than a grown person, and its loss is more speedily replaced, putting the precariousness of its life out of the question.

The Guanches nation is extinct, or nearly so, and this renders every memorial of it an object of interest, independent of that agreeable reverie which allows us to regard it as having been composed of the posterity of the inhabitants of the ancient Atlantis. When we hear of the destruction of thousands of individuals belonging to a populous community, we are comparatively little affected, because the event is in the common course of nature, and because other thousands still remain to perpetuate the

race, and repair the losses which it has sustained; but the extinction of an entire nation awakens reflections of a different kind; for it conveys to us an impression that one of the grand families of the human species has been irrecoverably swept from the earth, and we feel anxious to preserve some record of its existence, and of its customs and prejudices. These latter become sacred in our eyes, should their character be innocent; and if it is the reverse, we cease to be offended by them, when we consider that their operation is over, and that no one remains to adopt and diffuse them, or to experience their malignant influence.

# GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF WEST AFRICA.

THE following sketch of the general character of the West Coast of Africa is intended to refer to those parts of it only where Europeans have formed establishments, and will embrace those objects and features alone which make the strongest impression upon a foreigner, and most affect him during his residence in the country.

The coast of Marocco, between the Straits of Gibraltar and the mouth of the Senegal, is throughout very barren and low; though it is here and there diversified by a few sand-hills of small elevation. The sea, within several leagues of the shore, is shallow and full of banks and shoals, which render the navigation there extremely dangerous; and it would appear that the coasts of Barbary are fast gaining

upon the ocean, owing to the continual drifting of the sands of the Great Desert in that direction. A current also sets from the north-east during two-thirds of the year, and doubtless brings with it quantities of mud and sand, which it deposits along the coasts, and which perpetually combine with the former cause to fill up the bed of the sea. Many places on the coast of Marocco, which were once excellent and well-frequented ports, are now choked up by sand-bars, and are inaccessible even for boats. This has been particularly the case with respect to Sallee, not long since famous as being an established rendezvous for Moorish pirates. The town, which formerly was washed by the sea, is now more than a mile distant from it; and the port itself, strictly speaking, no longer exists. Between the Straits of Gibraltar and the Senegal, no river of any magnitude or consequence is found; and even springs of water are of rare occurrence, and generally brackish, and the country is of course barren and desolate, and thinly inhabited.

But, on reaching the mouth of the Senegal, we find nature wearing a very different garb, and perhaps in no other part of the world is her transition from one extreme to another more sudden

and complete than it is here. This river pursues nearly an east and west course through the interior of Africa, as far as it has been explored, till it comes within about two leagues of the sea at Serenpate, where it forms an elbow almost equal to a right angle, and afterwards runs parallel with the coast for fifty miles, and then discharges itself into the Atlantic Ocean in about 16° north latitude. Between Serenpate and its mouth, it is separated from the sea by a long neck or tongue of land varying in width from three miles to as many hundred yards, particularly towards its southern extremity, which is called the Point of Barbary, and which is in some places so low and flat, that the river, when flooded by heavy rains, often bursts over it, and forms for itself new outlets to carry off its superabundant waters. But the real mouth of the Senegal always lies at the end of the Point of Barbary, and is distinguished a considerable way to seaward by the breakers which extend across it, even in the calmest weather.

On making the coast, the long tongue of land already described is first seen, and is little calculated to give the spectator a favourable idea of the neighbouring country; for its

surface consists of loose sand, of a dazzling whiteness, drifted into irregular ridges by the wind, and sprinkled here and there with a few stunted bushes of a brownish hue. No houses, human beings, or marks of cultivation diminish the dreary uniformity of the prospect; and the brilliant sunshine of a tropical climate seems only to give a painful distinctness to its horrid features, and to make its solitude and unfruitfulness more apparent. The adjoining coast presents a shelving beach, along which a heavy surf constantly breaks. Here birds of the egret kind resort in considerable numbers, and disposing themselves in files, stand motionless basking in the sun with their heads under their wings. During the day, the reflection from the shore is nearly intolerable to the eye; and the heated sand rarefying to an extraordinary degree the stratum of air in contact with it, produces a kind of mirage, which not only distorts and disguises all objects within its influence, but communicates to them an appearance of tremulous motion, which makes the observer feel giddy should he continue to look abroad for any length of time.

But after crossing the bar of the Senegal and rounding the Point of Barbary, the Libyan

desert is no longer seen, and the eye, wherever it turns, rests upon a mass of luxuriant vegetation consisting chiefly of trees that are unknown in European climates. Amongst them are found palms of various kinds, such as the date, the cocoa-nut, and the areca; and also the cotton-tree, the wild fig, the tamarind, and the banana. But the one that chiefly attracts the attention is the bahobab or calabash tree, which is the largest vegetable production in the world: its trunk, according to Adanson, sometimes measuring sixty or seventy feet in circumference, and throwing out no branches for nearly an equal height from the ground. These stately trees love the banks of the river, where they form places of general resort for nearly all the animal inhabitants of the forest. Their larger branches are peopled with monkeys of different kinds, which, after uniting into small detachments, run to their farthest extremities, and having there for a few moments surveyed the persons passing by in boats, and saluted them with discordant cries, hurry back into the shade, and are soon succeeded by new reconnoitring parties of the same species. On the twigs projecting over the river, birds of the kingfisher tribe suspend

their nests, woven in a pear-like shape, where they swing to and fro with every breath of wind, safe from the depredations of either apes or serpents; while many reptiles of the latter kind, varying in size and colour, twine themselves round the lower boughs, in order to watch conveniently for prey, and dart down upon it when it does appear. The roots of the bahobab afford shelter to multitudes of squirrels which sport amongst their interstices, and its trunk is studded with lizards of the most resplendent hues, lying in wait for the insects which fly around in myriads and keep up an incessant and sonorous humming. Alligators lie basking in the sun upon the shallows in the middle of the river, and their musky scent is often perceptible when, frightened by the approach of a boat, they plunge under water and swim lazily away. The crashing of boughs, heard occasionally in the depth of the forest, announces that troops of elephants are passing along there; and in the various little bays and inlets that indent the banks of the stream, flamingoes may be seen standing together in pairs, and laving with water their scarlet wings; while other birds, equal in beauty, but still more shy and so-

litary, flutter amongst the bushes, or make their presence known only by the melody or strangeness of their notes.

Such are a few of the objects which first strike the senses of him who visits Western Africa. There nature seems everywhere bountiful and prolific, and the animal and vegetable worlds develope a countless variety of forms; and even the processes of their decay and reproduction go on more rapidly than in almost any other country. The soil is so fertile that grain is sowed and reaped in the space of three months; and abundant and periodical rains produce a supply of water everywhere, and, swelling the rivers, cause them to inundate the neighbouring lands, which are thus maintained in a state of constant productiveness, while the humidity of the ground is preserved during the dry season by the extensive and lofty forests which cover a large proportion of the country.

The principal vegetable productions of West Africa are maize, or Indian corn, which grows there in great perfection, and in many districts constitutes the chief subsistence of the natives; millet, a kind of grain equally useful and agreeable as an article of food; rice, similar to

that of Carolina; the banana and plantain, so universally known throughout the East Indies; the yam, and sweet potato, and other roots of a similar kind; the manioc, or cassava, and various species of pulse and pot-herbs. The sugar-cane, the tobacco-plant and indigo, and cotton, are indigenous to the country, as well as a kind of pepper which somewhat resembles that brought from Malabar. The chief domestic animals are cows, oxen, sheep, goats, and poultry. Though in most districts both the vegetable and animal productions above mentioned abound, yet the lands are but partially cultivated; and that, too, only in the immediate neighbourhood of the villages, which are mostly built upon the banks of a river, or not far from the sea-shore.

Of all the productions of their country, that which the natives value most highly is the palm-tree, because it affords both oil and wine. The first is extracted from the nut, and the latter is obtained from the trunk by cutting off a young branch, or making an incision in the bark. A calabash is placed beneath the aperture to collect the liquor, two or three pints of which will flow out spontaneously in twenty-four hours. Another esteemed vege-

table production of West Africa is the kola nut: it somewhat resembles a chesnut in shape and consistence, but it is smaller, and is enclosed in a hard shell. It grows in clusters upon a large tree, and is annually collected by the negroes, who are in the habit of chewing it, and consider it the greatest luxury that their country affords, not even excepting palm wine. The kola nut is far from being so plentiful, at least everywhere, as to answer the general demand for it; and the poorer class of negroes can seldom afford to indulge in its use, and the rich pay a very high price for it. Its taste is bitter and astringent; and water drunk after the nut has been chewed has the taste of the finest white wine, and fruit appears improved in flavour, and even tobacco acquires a peculiar fragrance. In certain districts these nuts are so highly esteemed, that with forty or fifty of them a man may purchase a wife; and the negro princes often present a few to their chief officers as a mark of particular favour and confidence. The kola is also in general use as money, and in several parts of West Africa the people know no other circulating medium. Some of the early European voyagers were not a little astonished to find a

vegetable production employed in this way; not because it was obtainable for the seeking, (though doubtless with trouble and difficulty,) but because of its perishable nature, and its not being one of the necessaries of life, or of any definite and intrinsic value. But we have examples of a similar kind in countries in a much higher state of civilization than West Africa. In Hindostan the cowry shell is employed as a substitute for small specie; and in Venezuela and the Caraccas the people are in the habit of giving and taking common eggs in exchange for articles of small price. But the vegetable money most worthy of record is that which was employed by the Mexicans at the time of the invasion of their country by Cortez; and their custom in this respect was the more remarkable, because they had abundance of gold and silver, and skilful artificers capable of converting these metals into specie. Nevertheless, the common circulating medium was the cacoa bean; and what Peter Martyr says upon this subject in his Decades of the Ocean, applies scarcely less to the kola nut just described, than to the immediate object of his remarks. "Oh, blessed money!" he exclaims, "which yieldeth sweete and profitable drinke

for mankind, and preserveth the possessors thereof free from the hellish pestilence of avarice, because it cannot be long kept or hid under ground."

The most valuable articles which West Africa affords, at least as respects commerce, are ivory and gold. Elephants abound in the vast forests which extend along the banks of the rivers Senegal and Gambia, and they are objects of daily chase on account of their tusks, some of which weigh from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds, but the ivory which they afford is thought to be inferior to that of India and Ceylon. Gold is more or less common throughout the whole of West Africa; but the natives know it only in the state of dust, for they are not far enough advanced in the arts to extract the metal from the ore, or even to obtain the latter by mining. The gold dust is found either in the beds of rivers, or is procured from the soil by washing; but we are unacquainted with the particular spots or districts which yield it in greatest quantity, the negroes carefully concealing these from the knowledge of Europeans. We may easily believe that West Africa abounds with this metal in an extraordinary degree, from the large

quantity of it that is constantly in circulation there, and from the ascertained fact that all of it is collected either on the surface of the soil, or within the depth of three or four feet below it.

That part of the coast of Africa comprised between the mouth of the river Senegal, in north latitude 16°, and Cape Negro, in south latitude 16°, presents a remarkable contrast in its physical character with the northern and southern extremities of the continent. The former tract of country is, generally speaking, flat and alluvial, abundantly watered by streams and springs, covered with forests, and highly fertile under the slightest cultivation. Here the palm, the banana, the fig-tree, the sugar-cane, and the cotton-plant, blend their foliage and struggle for preeminence in the forest; buffaloes, wild cows, deer, boars, and elephants, people the plains and meadows; and the rainy season never fails with grateful return to deluge the burning soil, and communicate vigour and freshness to all its productions. But, on the other hand, Barbary and South Africa, though respectively situated under far happier latitudes than the Western coast, and intersected by chains of lofty mountains such as

ought to produce abundant and overflowing rivers, consist almost entirely of sandy plains and arid wastes, strangers to all the finer and more luxuriant forms of vegetation, and producing even with difficulty the mimosæ, the cacti, and the euphorbia,—emblems of nature's poverty and degradation wherever they occur. Contrary to general experience, too, the regions in question have no mines of the precious metals to compensate for their other deficiencies; though their appearance, and the character of their soil, would seem to indicate the existence of these, and to point them out as lands of promise to the diggers of gold.

One feature is alone common to all the coasts of Africa without exception, viz. the total want of good harbours; and though in many other countries such a defect is supplied by the accessibleness of the rivers, Africa is also unfortunate here, none of her streams, however large, admitting vessels of burthen, owing to the sandbars which universally obstruct their mouths. From the Straits of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope there is scarcely one secure and commodious port; and if we range northward from the latter point along Caffraria and Mozambique up to the

entrance of the Red Sea, we shall find the whole coast to be equally inhospitable for shipping. Shall we venture to attribute this continuousness of the land, this unbroken outline of coast, to the peculiar form of the grand continent in which it is observable?

The triangular or wedge-like shape of Africa seems favourable to the action of currents, which, when they run along a regularly converging slope of vast extent, must have a tendency to sweep away projecting points of land, to fill up bays, and to obliterate sinuosities; because their force is lateral, and not direct, and because the nature of their course makes them act with equality, and is unfavourable to their encroaching in any one quarter more than another.

The rivers of West Africa are not navigable in proportion to their magnitude and the length of their course, their channels generally being much obstructed by sandbanks, except during the floods that succeed the rainy season, soon after which the waters begin to lower; and the small sloops that are sent up the Senegal and Gambia to trade, if not sufficiently expeditious in returning, are often left aground high up the river, where they necessarily re-

main till the next rains. But the inconvenience of this kind of inland navigation is trifling compared with that arising from the sandbars which stretch across the mouths of the great rivers of West Africa, and not only prevent the entrance of shipping, but are also extremely dangerous for boats; and the passage is sometimes altogether impracticable for days together. The bar of the Senegal being particularly formidable, it merits a description, and the more so as a general idea will thus be obtained of the bars of all other African rivers of a similar size.

During the rainy season the mouth of the Senegal is about a league in width, and is constantly furrowed by a rapid current, which is met and opposed by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, driven towards the coast by the prevailing north-west winds, and thrown into violent agitation by the resistance offered by the sandbar lying directly under the spot where the two hostile floods come into full contact. But the effects of their junction are apparent at short intervals only; and an inexperienced observer, happening to look towards the bar immediately after these had taken place, would suppose that there was nothing to be expected

there different from what was going on in any other part of the neighbouring sea.

The first indication of what is soon to follow, is a gathering together, as it were, and swelling of the waters, which gradually and silently rise up, and form one lofty broad-based wave extending across nearly the whole width of the river; and when it has acquired its greatest elevation, breaking into a wreath of foam along its top, after which it quickly sinks down, and all becomes quiet and smooth as before. Presently this is repeated, but with the difference that the wave has much greater height and size the second time, and breaks more violently and tumultuously. But its third accession far exceeds in every respect the two preceding ones; for it rises eighteen or twenty feet perpendicularly upon a base of prodigious magnitude, and its crest, suddenly bursting, divides longitudinally, and, falling down with a terrific roaring, covers the adjoining sea with foam, which has hardly time to disappear before the waters show symptoms of recommencing their strife.

The climate of West Africa is divided into two seasons only, viz. the rainy and the dry one. The former begins in May with tornadoes

and frightful storms of thunder and lightning, and lasts till the middle of October, when it terminates in much the same way. It rains more or less daily all that time, but the greatest quantity descends in June and July; however, as no observations have hitherto been made with the pluviometer in that part of the world, we can have no accurate idea of the average fall of rain in the course of the season. Probably it is not much short of what occurs in the same latitudes on the western side of India, where the south-west monsoon very much resembles in character the wet season on the coast of Africa, and where the fall of rain ranges in general between eighty and one hundred inches.

In both countries the humidity of the air at these periods is extreme, but particularly in the latter, because of the natural lowness of the ground, and the thick forests which overspread it in all directions. The dry season in West Africa commences in November, and lasts till May; and during its continuance there is always a cloudless sky and a transparent atmosphere, except when the wind called Harmattan prevails: this generally blows from the north-east for several days together, rendering

the air hazy and reddish, and withering the grass and leaves by its dryness.

The Romans seem to have been well acquainted with the animals of West Africa; for it was chiefly from thence, though by an indirect route, that they obtained those which were exhibited in their circuses, or made to fight with gladiators for the amusement of the people. But there is one species of the African mammalia which must have been unknown to them, for none of their writers describe it, and its peculiarities are such as would have excited their strongest interest and attention had they ever enjoyed an opportunity of seeing it alive. I mean the simia satyrus, or ouran-outang, the most intelligent, and the most resembling man, of all the monkey tribe. It exists in the forests that border the south side of the Senegal; and we cannot well explain how no individuals of the kind should ever have found their way to Rome, seeing that the Libyans could so easily have procured and carried them to Carthage for sale, as they did various other animals much more bulky and formidable. Some writers, indeed, are of opinion that the ancients must have derived their idea of satyrs from their knowledge of the ex-

istence of the simia satyrus; however, Aulus Gellius, who devotes a long chapter of his Attic Nights to the enumeration of the wonderful races of men and man-monsters that were described to inhabit various parts of the world by ancient writers, mentions none that have any points of resemblance in common with the simia satyrus.

But on the other hand, the Periplus of Hanno contains the following passage, descriptive of one of the incidents that occurred in the course of the Carthaginian nautical expedition along the coast of Africa, already alluded to:—"There was also a lake containing another island inhabited by savages. The women were more numerous than the men. Their bodies were covered with hair, and our interpreters called them Gorillæ. We failed in catching any of the men, for they took refuge amongst precipices, and defended themselves with stones. We, however, seized three women; but as they broke their bonds, and bit and tore us with fury, we found it necessary to kill them, and having flayed them, we brought their skins to Carthage."

In the opinion of Gosellin, the geographer, these Gorillæ, whom Hanno mistook for human

creatures, were in reality ouran-outangs. However this may be, had the ancients been aware that these animals existed in small communities, they would eagerly have sought for specimens of them to realize their fables of Satyrs and Fauns, and would have regarded them as an inferior grade of the human species. This opinion would neither have been offensive to their feelings, nor inconsistent with their creed; for so far from believing, as we do, that all men are descended from the same parents, they supposed that the world was peopled in two different ways—either by emigration from an inhabited part to an uninhabited one, or by the natural production of the human race out of the soil of the region which they might be found to occupy.

The forms and capacities of the higher orders of the monkey tribe have at all times been a subject of curiosity and speculation, and particularly since we have become acquainted with the habits of the simia satyrus. Humboldt remarks, that "monkeys are more melancholy in proportion as they have more resemblance to man; their petulant gaiety diminishes as their intellectual faculties appear to increase." We shall find this observation to be

perfectly correct, if we compare the behaviour of those individuals that walk on all-fours with that of those which mostly preserve an erect posture. The first are irritable, noisy, and mischievous, and inclined for frolic; while the others seem to be full of reflection, and always preserve a grave deportment and a sombre physiognomy. It is impossible to deny that apes display more intelligence and greater powers of reasoning the nearer they approach to the human form; but are we to infer from hence that this development of the faculties is entirely the result of a superior organization, which permits the individual enjoying it to manifest his intelligence, though he may actually possess that quality in no higher degree than the lowest of animated beings do?

In judging of the mental powers of animals, we are in the habit of comparing together different classes or genera—not individuals of the same species—because it is the universal impression that all such possess exactly, or at least very nearly, the same degree of intelligence. Horses differ little from each other in intelligence, nor do elephants; but it is obvious that the elephant species displays faculties su-

perior to what appear to belong to that of the horse. Nevertheless, we may venture to suppose that the intelligent principle is entirely of the same grade and nature in both animals, but that the elephant is enabled to *manifest* a superiority in this respect, merely from his possessing an organization which affords him a greater facility of displaying his capacity and explaining the operations of his mind. Shall we then conclude that the principle which constitutes mind in *animals*, is precisely the same in every species whatever; and that the oyster, which is tossed about by the waves, or lies motionless in the bottom of the sea, possesses the same degree of intelligence as a monkey of the highest grade; but that its organization neither permits it to exhibit this externally, nor to feel a desire to exceed those bounds of action, locomotion, and enjoyment, which have been assigned to it and to all other individuals of the same form and constitution?

## ABORIGINES OF WEST AFRICA.

THE contrast in the physical character of the countries bordering upon the two sides of the Senegal, and the barrenness of the one and the fertility of the other, have already been described. Nor do their respective inhabitants differ less essentially, whether in regard to external appearance, or to their moral and natural qualities and dispositions. The Moors of the deserts of Barbary are of an olive complexion, tall, athletic, and active, and ferocious in temper and inclined for warfare; while the negroes on the opposite bank of that river have jet-black skins and woolly hair, and are a mild, indolent, and peaceable race, placing their greatest happiness in an exemption from labour or pain.

Their country affords in abundance, and almost without cultivation, those articles which they consider the necessaries of life; while rivers and periodical rains cool its burning atmo-

sphere, and lofty forests yield its inhabitants shelter from the sun. The Moors, on the other hand, occupy a sandy desert and lead a nomade life, and are continually either driving their flocks over the country in search of pasture, or galloping away upon hostile or plundering expeditions. They often suffer from hunger and thirst, and their tents are little calculated to defend them from the summer ardours of their climate. In winter they wander about the plains, and in the warm season they retire with their cattle to the mountains in the interior of Barbary, and their life, wherever they are, consists, or rather appears to consist, of a succession of hardships and privations.

Here we are naturally led to ask, why the Moors have not long ago abandoned their inhospitable territories and crossed the Senegal, and possessed themselves of part of its inviting banks? Surpassing the negroes in courage and in the art of war, they would easily have made such a conquest, had they ever felt disposed to do so; and we must seek to explain their indifference in this respect, by referring it to their national character.

The Arabs or Moors are so devotedly attached to the wild and wandering life which

they lead in the desert, that no proffered advantages will ever induce them to forego it; ease and abundance present few allurements to them, if these are only to be obtained by a sacrifice of established habits and of accustomed scenes and objects; and the dull expanse of the sandy plain, and the husky sweep of the dry wind careering over it, are dearer to the eye and ear of an Arab than a view of cultivated fields and the sound of woods and waters.

A tribe of these people settling upon the fertile shores of West Africa, would alike forfeit its dignity in forsaking the usages of its ancestors, and its independence in tilling the ground and remaining stationary. And in accordance with this, it is very certain that the Moors of Barbary have at no time entered the negro country in a hostile manner, except for the purpose of carrying off cattle or slaves; on effecting which, they never failed to return home.

The negro character, like that of most other uncivilized nations, has been variously represented; but most commonly in an unfavourable point of view, because of the prejudices and prepossessions of those who have described it. If we reflect what influence a warm climate, and the easy attainment of the necessaries of

life, generally exert upon any race of men, we shall come to a fair conclusion respecting the leading points of the negro character, modified as these are by two powerful sources of moral degradation—the despotic tyranny of petty sovereigns, and the existence of slavery. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of West Africa are not far removed from that state of social existence in which the simple propensities and dispositions of our species are permitted to develope themselves without direction or restraint; and in which no peculiar physical causes force the character to assume a particular bias dependent upon the nature of the interests and pursuits of the individual.

A people who live by plundering others are naturally treacherous and unfeeling, because it is their business to be so; men who subsist by hunting, and whose lives are spent in traversing forests and deserts, are of a reserved and melancholy disposition, because of their peculiar occupations; and savages, living in a state of constant warfare with their neighbours, are necessarily distrustful and irritable. But a race of people who obtain their means of subsistence without exertion or anxiety, and who suffer no physical evils, are always mild in temper,

and of a serene and placid disposition: not being harassed by any particular idea connected with their mode of life, they deliver themselves up without reserve to the impressions of the moment, and are lovers of society, hospitable, inclined to pleasure, and averse to mental exertion, but withal timid, indolent, deficient in steadiness, and destitute of foresight.

Such is nearly the general character of the negroes of West Africa. Their labours, which are light, devolve chiefly upon the women, and both sexes spend a large part of their time in amusement, which is mostly pursued during the night. Fires are then lighted; and the ball, or *folgar*, commences, and continues for several hours. The young people dance, and the old ones sit by talking, smoking, and looking on; and it is remarked that however fatiguing the occupations of the parties may have been during the day, they never fail to attend the folgar and partake of its pleasures with vivacity. Next morning they resume their usual occupations, looking anxiously forward to the renewal of the folgar in the evening, when they again sing, dance, and smoke, as before. This is the usual mode of life of a negro in his native country; and, so far as tranquillity of

mind is concerned, he may be regarded as one of the happiest of human beings. With ambition he is totally unacquainted; he does not seek to acquire riches, because he is always contented with what he actually possesses; and, knowing nothing beyond what comes within the range of his senses, he conceives that nothing else is worth the knowing. Should any misfortune befall him, he lays it to the credit of some malignant spirit, and trusts that his own *fetiche*, or household god, will repair it: if any unexpected good comes upon him, he enjoys it to the utmost without delay, in order to avoid the risk of losing the advantage before he has had time to turn it to account.

To war, and all kinds of fighting, the negro has the utmost aversion, and never will risk his life to preserve his own property, because he rightly judges that it is not worth defending with so much hazard to himself. Satisfied with the enjoyments and sources of interest which the common routine of his life affords, he neither experiences *ennui*, nor torments himself in seeking for new pursuits and sensations; and consequently his temper is always cheerful and serene, and the most violent and dangerous

passions of human nature for the most part remain dormant in his mind.

It will surely be admitted, that men in the circumstances above described cannot well be atrociously wicked in their nature, or evilly disposed towards each other. Their virtues may be of a negative description, but their vices will have no very positive form, even though they may be as destitute of any rational system of religion, or of a code of defined moral duties, as the negroes are. Indeed, it is in a barbarous state only that men can exist in a social condition without religion or laws.

The first lesson which civilization bestows is, to teach us to be discontented with our condition, to study how we may best circumvent each other, to consider the acquisition of wealth and external dignities as our supreme good in this life, and to regard with contempt those individuals who love innocent and unambitious simplicity. The prevalence of ideas of this kind, (without which no nation can become great or flourishing,) leads to a multitude of crimes and disorders, by producing that universal opposition of interests, that furious rivalry, and those innumerable temptations to immoral and unjust actions which exist in all

highly civilized communities. Hence the necessity of imposing violent restraints upon men's inclinations, by the establishment of sanguinary laws, and the erection of judicial tribunals, prisons, and places of public execution, all of which however prove inadequate to the end proposed; for the most polished and best instructed nations are invariably the most vicious, and it is in them that human depravity finds her widest scope, and assumes the darkest character and the greatest variety of forms. But men who are contented with what moderately assisted nature bestows, and whose interests and passions are not excited by a host of seducing objects, may live, and generally do live, in comparative innocence and harmony, although profoundly ignorant as to the arts and the economy of civilized nations.

The above remarks are directed against those persons who would persuade us that the negroes are habitually and naturally wicked and barbarous, and that they have no good qualities whatever. To argue seriously against the correctness of an opinion so absurd and untenable, would be waste of time; but it deserves some notice, because it has been brought forward in justification of the slave trade, and has been

repeated by writers who were contented to say what had already been said, without inquiring into the truth or probability of their assertions. It must be recollected that even those who pretend to speak upon this subject from personal observation, are not deserving of much confidence, being chiefly factors and traders, who, having intercourse with the coast negroes only, or rather with the slave-dealers, brokers, and petty merchants amongst them, have judged of the entire people by the worst specimens of them that were anywhere to be found.

When we consider the general character and conduct of those Europeans who have hitherto been in the habit of frequenting the coast of Africa, we shall perceive that the negroes must have found it necessary in their transactions with them to disregard integrity and justice, in order to avoid the chance of being maltreated, plundered, and overreached. One of the greatest calumniators of the natives of West Africa is Bosman, who was many years in the service of the Dutch Company trading there; and the following is his summary view of their character:—

"The negroes are all, without exception, crafty, villainous, and fraudulent, and very

seldom to be trusted, being sure to let slip no opportunity of cheating an European, nor indeed one another. A man of integrity is as rare among them as a white falcon, and their fidelity seldom extends further than to their masters; and it would be very surprising if, upon a scrutiny into their lives, we should find any of them whose perverse nature would not break out sometimes, for they indeed seem to be born and bred villains, all sorts of baseness having got such sure footing among them, that it is impossible to lie concealed; and herein they agree very well with what authors tell us of the Muscovites."

But we obtain a key to the apparent depravity if we reflect how Europeans have deported themselves on the coast of Africa. It is notorious that the grossest frauds and acts of injustice were practised upon the negroes by the agents and factors of the different mercantile companies who used to have posts there for the convenience of carrying on the slave-trade. And Barbot informs us that in his time the negroes were so distrustful of Europeans, that in many places they would not venture on board their ships, because hundreds of them had at different times been kidnapped in that

manner, and carried away to the West Indies and there sold as slaves. The same author, in speaking of the frequent adulteration of gold-dust, says, that the negroes were first taught that art by the Portuguese, in order that they might practise it upon other European nations visiting the country, and disgust them with the African trade.

Bosman, above quoted, tells a story of two English ship-masters who had exchanged nearly their whole cargoes for false gold-dust. On discovering the imposition, they applied to the English chief governor residing in that part of the coast for redress; but, says our author, "to complain to him was to go to the devil to be confessed, for he, participating in the fraud, would by no means help them." Private traders in West Africa used for many years to practise the grossest impositions upon the negroes, by giving them in exchange for the productions of their country, damaged cloths, unsafe muskets, false coral, and unserviceable cutlery.

The authority of Lieutenant Beaver on this subject is worthy of being quoted. "I need not mention," says he, in his African Memoranda, "the various modes which Euro-

peans take to overreach them in trade by light weights, short measure, diminished capacity, &c.; all of which are now as well known to the natives as to us; and therefore, as before observed, they consider us a compound of treachery and deceit. There is nothing degrading, nothing base, nothing infamous, but what they consider to form part of the white man's character." Were the negroes to submit to all this without attempting retaliation? Were they to remain honest while their visitors practised every kind of villany and deception?—No! they found that they must either break off all intercourse with foreigners, or make themselves a match for them by adopting some of their iniquities.

Pinkerton, in his Geography, describes the negroes as being "akin to ferocious animals," and as a people whose "chief pleasure is to destroy;" and various other writers have characterized them as the basest and most degraded portion of the human race. I must refer in particular to the Reverend Mr. Bridges, who has recently, in his Annals of Jamaica, given a view of the state of the negroes in their native land. That article contains many misrepresentations; and how far the author is qualified

for the task which he has undertaken, will best be shown by the following extracts from the production in question :—

"In every age, the various regions of Africa appear to have been inhabited by vagrant tribes, whose indolence refused to cultivate the soil, and whose restless spirit disdained the confinement of a sedentary life." I believe we may safely assert, in contradiction to this statement, that there neither is, nor ever was, *one* vagrant tribe in any part of Africa comprehended between the river Senegal and Cape Negro, an extent of 32° of latitude. This will enable us to determine how far Mr. Bridges' geographical information is to be depended upon; and a few other random extracts will equally qualify us to form an opinion respecting his impartiality, and the degree of confidence that may be placed in the accuracy of his descriptions.

Speaking of the negroes, he says, "All that is monstrous, vile, and contemptible, is universally found amongst these savages, whose native cowardice can be stimulated only by the consciousness of numbers"—"their garments are the most loathsome skins!"—"from the earliest years they are exercised in the destruction of

each other"—"and, if we fill up the outline of the general picture, we must stain it with a view of the horrid rites of cannibalism"—"their actions are the simple result of revengeful selfish feeling, influenced by the crimes which universally prevail amongst them."—"Africa is the parent of everything monstrous in nature—there the passions rage without control, and the retired wilderness presents an opportunity to gratify them without fear or shame."

Is the above the language of *truth*, or of common sense? Ought it to proceed from the pen of a Christian clergyman, who is bound to believe that all mankind are his brethren, and to view them with charitable forbearance? The spirit in which his "Original State of the Negroes" is written, is as offensive and reprehensible, as the calumnies which it embodies against that race are gratuitous and unfounded.

I will now proceed to the more agreeable task of presenting the reader with a few testimonies in favour of the negro character, by writers of much higher and less suspicious authority than any of those above referred to. The following are the words of M. Mollien, who travelled through a considerable part of West Africa,

and visited the sources of the Senegal and Gambia rivers:—"Without money, without an order from the sovereign, without recommendation, an inn is always to be found in Africa; and it is not an accommodation offered out of pity to a poor and unknown traveller, as is often the case in Europe; it is not a bundle of straw given from compassion as to a beast. If food is offered, it is not the remnants of a meal; on the contrary, you are treated like a friend; for half an hour at least your health is inquired into with particular attention, you are seated by the side of your host, who apologises for the homeliness of the repast, &c."

The Abbé Proyart, in his history of Loanga and the neighbouring countries, observes, that we judge of the mass of the negroes by those resident upon the coast, who, being daily imposed upon by Europeans, make no scruple of imposing upon them in return; and he asserts, that those who inhabit the interior of the country "unite to a great deal of justice and frankness, a disinterestedness which may be called excessive." Robault, a French traveller who made a journey to Galan by land in 1786, everywhere experienced the most genuine hospitality and the kindest treatment from the

negro chiefs through whose territories he had occasion to pass; and Adanson, the naturalist, in his travels in the same quarter, observed nothing but peace and security amongst the natives, and found them to be everywhere harmless and happy.

Park, speaking of the Mandingoes, in his first journey, says, "it is impossible for me to forget the disinterested charity and tender solicitude with which many of these poor heathens sympathized with me in my sufferings, relieved my distresses, and contributed to my safety." In another place he describes the affection which the mothers universally display towards their children, and makes the following remark:—"I perceived with great satisfaction too, that the maternal solicitude extended not only to the growth and security of the person, but also, in a certain degree, to the improvement of the mind, of the infant; for one of the first lessons in which the Mandingo women instruct their children, is *the practice of truth.*"

Maltebrun, the geographer, thus characterises the natives of West Africa:—"The negro race, even supposing it to be inferior in intelligence to Europeans, Arabs, or Hindoos, possesses, nevertheless, the faculties requisite to admit of its

appreciating and adopting our laws and institutions. Notwithstanding the gloomy picture which we have just traced of the actual state of Africa, the negro is not unacquainted with any of those feelings which *dignify and exalt human nature.*"

And with regard to the charge of cannibalism that has been brought against the negroes, where is the authority to substantiate it? Bosman, who is always disposed to exaggerate the vices of these people, makes no mention of this one. Park, in the course of his extensive travels, saw nothing of it. Maltebrun quotes a passage from Grandpre's voyages, to show that it has no existence. Robertson, author of Notes on Africa, and many years a trader in that country, says, that he once heard a story of the kind, but soon obtained proofs of its falsity.

Having endeavoured to defend the negroes from the imputation of vices which do not belong to them, I will now speak of the real defects of their character, without palliation or reserve. The first of these is a stupid indolence, and an indifference to the future, which prevent their wishing to improve their condition, and render them neglectful of their commonest interests. They are incapable of engaging steadily in any

pursuit, and their caprice is so great, that they have scarcely done anything before they begin to repent that it is done; and if they make an exchange or a bargain, they will generally request that it may be annulled or reversed, perhaps within half an hour after it has been effected. They possess no firmness or determination, and when engaged in affairs of danger and importance, the most contemptible trifle will discourage them, and make them withdraw from their post; nor have they the least idea that there is any honour or merit in struggling against difficulties, or any disgrace in suddenly abandoning the design or purpose which they may have in hand before it is half accomplished. In some countries it is an admissible practice amongst the negroes to entice one another into the commission of such offences as are punishable by a fine. The betrayer, should he succeed in this, immediately accuses his victim, and appears as a witness against him, when, having proved the charge, he receives a part of the sum levied, and turns it to his own account. Nor can it be denied, that on several parts of the coast, the negroes are in the habit of entrapping and selling each other as slaves. But this kind of villany must have been alike

unknown and impracticable in West Africa previous to the commencement of the slave trade by Europeans, who most likely suggested it as a way of getting cheap slaves. Every one will admit that robbery is much promoted in large towns by the existence of shops for the reception of stolen goods; and upon the same principle the entrapping of men became a common practice upon the coast of Guinea, because there were always European agents ready and willing to purchase and receive on board their ships these victims of iniquity, without asking or caring how they had been obtained.

Nearly all the graver defects of the negro character are referable to the odious forms of government which prevail in most parts of their country. It is not sufficient that their kings and rulers should be despots,—they actually derive their chief revenues from the crimes of their subjects; slavery being the allotted punishment of most offences, great and small. No sooner is a misdemeanour committed than the offending person is sold for a slave, and the greater part of the amount received for him goes into the royal treasury. And when the sovereign is in distress for money, he does not hesitate to send out a party

of soldiers into the more retired quarters of his dominions, to seize whatever individuals they may chance to meet, in order that they may be disposed of for the supply of his necessities. The people are thus in continual expectation of danger from the quarter to which they naturally ought to look for protection; and their personal safety being so precarious, they are discouraged from being either industrious or provident. The caboceers, or nobles, also plunder them of their property in various ways; and the frequent occurrence of human sacrifices on festival days, and on the death of any of the royal family, frighten them into a state of stupid despair, which benumbs their faculties, and smothers all idea of resistance to the usual course of things.

Nothing can be more unjust and unreasonable than to consider the nature of a despotic government to be characteristic of the people who are governed. Yet this is generally done in reference to West Africa; and the sanguinary sacrifices and wanton destruction of human life which take place in some parts of it under royal authority, are cited as an evidence of the inherent cruelty and ferocity of the negroes. On the contrary, it is only in re-

publics and free monarchies, where the people are constantly opposing their rulers, and declaiming against their political acts, that they really and universally approve of everything that is done, and fully identify themselves with the character of the government under which they live.

Wherever there is unreserved *external* acquiescence in the body of a nation, there is *inward* aversion and hostility towards its rulers. Will it for a moment be believed that the negroes of Dahomey or Ashantee, when they witness the slaughter of their fellow-countrymen at the "annual customs" held in these kingdoms, derive pleasure from the sight, or feel any desire to execute similar atrocities themselves? They view the horrid spectacle as a decree of fate, or as a part of the economy of nature; and think themselves no more capable of putting a stop to it, or preventing its recurrence, than of lulling a hurricane, or dispersing a thunder-storm. Human sacrifices daily took place in the temples of Mexico, yet the people of that country were mild and humane, and secretly shuddered at cruelties which they dared not openly condemn. Thus it is that the wild caprice or atrocious disposi-

tion of one man, whom chance or talents has raised to power, will introduce customs that are utterly repugnant to the feelings of the thousands whom he governs, and which, at first enforced by royal authority, are afterwards maintained by tradition, and at the same time daily execrated by those who have fatuitously adopted them.

In some of the small states of West Africa, and particularly in Dahomey, the taste for bloodshed in the sovereign, and the wanton sacrifice of human life that takes place in consequence, far exceed everything of the kind that is to be found in the history of any other part of the world. According to Dalzel, who has written an account of the kingdom abovementioned, an annual festival is celebrated there, at which the sovereign "waters the graves of his ancestors;" but it is not a river or a fountain that affords him the requisite fluid for that purpose—but hundreds of decapitated human bodies. The victims are mostly slaves brought from distant places; but when these cannot be procured in sufficient number, the deficiency is supplied out of the lower orders of the people of the country. For several days the executions go on almost with-

out intermission, and the enclosures of the palace are garnished with bloody human heads, while the carcases lie scattered about in the neighbourhood. But the most extraordinary feature of the scene, is a kind of dance, which is performed in presence of the king, by men, to the number of sixty or seventy, who hold each other by the hands, and move quickly round in a circle. Should any one of the party be observed to stumble, it is considered a bad omen, and the miserable wretch is forthwith removed from the ranks, and publicly beheaded; and, however often a similar execution may occur, there are always many individuals ready to fill the vacancies amongst the dancers, regardless of the risk to which they expose their lives by so doing.

At the time that Dalzel visited Dahomey, and witnessed these scenes, the sovereign was Trudo, one of the greatest negro generals ever known, and famed for his conquests and victories. When asked if he did not often make war with the sole view of procuring captives to sell to the European traders who frequented the coast, he warmly resented the imputation, and declared that he made it a rule never to dispose of a single slave upon any terms what-

ever, unless he happened to have a greater number than was sufficient to water the graves of his ancestors. At another time, on being reproached with cruelty, he denied the charge in general, but acknowledged that he sometimes caused a few fresh human heads to be thrown upon the bye-roads near his palace in the night-time, in order "that people might start when they came suddenly upon them next morning."

In Dahomey, it is customary for the king occasionally to send a message to his ancestors, which is accomplished in this way. He acquaints his friends and courtiers with his intention, and demands who will volunteer to perform the service required. Should any one of them come forward, he immediately communicates to him the message which he is to deliver in the next world, and then causes his head to be struck off. If, as sometimes happens, no man has zeal enough to offer himself as ambassador, the king selects an individual for the purpose, who, after receiving his instructions, is executed without delay. There is a singular coincidence between this usage and one recorded by Herodotus, as existing amongst a tribe of Scythians named Getæ.

These people believed in the immortality of the soul, and worshipped a god, or sage, named Xamoxlis, to whom they sent a messenger once every five years. The individual who engaged to perform this office, was projected into the air by the by-standers, and received upon the points of their spears in his fall, and mortally transfixed.

The kingdom of Dahomey, and its sanguinary form of government, may be regarded as one of those morbid excrescences which occasionally appear upon even the soundest and most healthy bodies. Instead of being an evidence of the natural cruelty of the Africans, it is the reverse, in so far as exception proves the rule; for nothing similar to it has been found in any other part of that great continent. Human sacrifices do indeed take place in Ashantee, upon particular occasions, but they are not attended with that cool deliberation and grotesque horror which characterise them in Dahomey. Upon the death of the king, or of any of the royal family, in the former kingdom, it is customary for the officers of state and caboceers, to rush into the public streets, and kill the first persons they happen to see; by which they intend to show that excessive

affliction for the loss of the deceased has deprived them of reason, and rendered them frantic.

The indigenous religion of the natives of West Africa is a strange medley of fantastic superstitions and observances; and it seems very remarkable, that a people, upon whom nature has imprinted an universal similarity of character and disposition, should possess no regular system of mythology, and no received and defined mode of belief. Not only is there a greater or less difference in the creed of every different nation, but the individuals composing each, vary in their adopted forms of worship, and in their religious opinions. Nowhere upon the west coast of Africa do we find regularly constituted native priests or ministers of religion, or places of worship, or even consecrated spots of ground. The only exception to this appears to be the kingdom of Fida, where a certain species of snake is the national deity; and where a building is set apart for its residence and worship, and priests appointed to attend upon it. In all other places, every man follows his own fancy in matters of religion, and chooses for his *fetiche*, or idol, whatever animal or thing happens to strike his imagi-

nation. He likewise makes a household god of whatever form he pleases, and offers his adoration to it as often as convenience or interest lead him to do so. It may easily be supposed that a mutual toleration prevails amongst the negroes, and that no one interferes with his neighbour, however different their respective idols may be.

Though the negroes are a cheerful, gay, and unreflecting people, their religious ideas, so far from partaking of these characters, are generally sombre and unattractive. Their mythology embraces no agreeable or ingenious allegories; and the attributes of their deities are such as are calculated to inspire fear and distrust, rather than hope and confidence. Their *fetiches*, or idols, are grossly-formed, bearing a small resemblance to the human figure, and the ceremonies practised at their worship are repugnant to common sense.

The Benin negroes believe that a man's shadow is appointed by his Creator to attend him during his life, that it may render an account of his deeds after his death. But they do not explain to us why the shadow deserts its post during the rainy season, when the sun is obscured. They likewise regard the great

ocean as the seat of the soul's future happiness or punishment; an idea which, as far as my knowledge goes, is entertained by no other people in the world. But they have no firm conviction of the truth of these, or, in short, of any of their religious opinions; and their faith, whatever its nature may be, consists altogether of accidental impressions, which are as quickly obliterated as they are easily renewed.

The only nation that pays any attention to the preservation of its received system of belief, is the Fidians. Whoever kills, or even accidentally injures, a snake of the species which is esteemed sacred amongst them, suffers death; and Bosman relates, that an English shipmaster and several of his crew, who had destroyed one of these reptiles, were murdered by the natives. This took place soon after Europeans had first begun to visit the coast of Africa; but he remarks, that even in his time, when the Fidians were more tolerant than formerly towards foreigners, it was highly dangerous for persons of the kind to molest, or even in any way disturb the sacred snakes.

Most of the negroes being thus unsettled in their religious opinions, and regarding the choice of a system of belief as a matter of taste

and convenience, it is not to be wondered that the Moorish Marabouts should have had so much success in converting them to Mahommedanism, or rather, in making them acquiesce in its doctrines. At what time the Marabouts first began to diffuse the tenets of the Koran in West Africa, is uncertain; but there is no doubt that they entered the country from Barbary by crossing the Senegal. They have been found in almost every part of the continent that has been visited by Europeans, and the reception of Mahommedanism by a very considerable proportion of the natives has attended their exertions to that effect wherever they have gone; and it may now be considered the general religion of the people of Africa, with the exception of those nations inhabiting its southern division.

The sole acquirements of a Marabout consist in being able to read the Koran, which many of them can do but indifferently. Those who, in addition, can write Arabic, are considered accomplished men, and are employed as schoolmasters. The simplicity of the negroes is easily imposed upon by the high pretensions and assuming demeanour of the Moorish priests, who find little difficulty in persuading them of the

truth of the Mahommedan religion, because they neither perplex nor annoy them by the discussion of metaphysical subtleties, nor insist upon their believing things which they are unable to comprehend. The natural mental indolence too, of the negro, disposes him to listen patiently and submissively to any instructor, and to repress any objections that may arise within himself to what is proposed, instead of bringing them forward and examining their validity.

But I am inclined to believe that one peculiarity in the character of the negroes has contributed more than anything else to strengthen and extend the influence of the Marabouts. What I allude to is, that extreme fear of death which prevails almost universally amongst the natives of West Africa, and to such a degree that they dislike even to hear the word mentioned. Bosman, in describing the inhabitants of the slave coast, says, "No negro in the whole country dare presume to speak of death in presence of the king, or of any great man, on penalty of undergoing it as a punishment himself." The Marabouts must soon have perceived that they might easily turn this general weakness to their private advantage, and

they accordingly offered for sale amulets or charms for protection against all kinds of dangers. Hence, doubtless, the origin of the *gris-gris*, which are in such universal request amongst the negroes of West Africa. A *gris-gris* is usually nothing more than a folded slip of paper, upon which a verse of the Koran is inscribed, and which is enclosed in a case of leather or metal, in order to protect it from injury or decay.

The Marabouts take care to make *gris-gris* of various qualities, so as to suit the views of different purchasers. One, for instance, is stated to be a security against drowning; a second has the property of averting musket-balls, and a third is meant to prevent death from snake-bites. The price of them varies in proportion to the greater or less magnitude of the evil which they are intended to neutralize or repel, and according to the wealth of those who apply for them; and no negro will be without one, if he can in any way compass the means of procuring it.

*Gris-gris* are hung round the neck, or attached to different parts of the body; and it is said that many of the richer class of negroes are so covered with them, that they answer

nearly the same purpose as a coat of arms, and really do protect the wearers from minor bodily injuries. Such is the confidence of the Africans in their efficacy, that it was customary for European traders, after having purchased a cargo of slaves, to despoil them of their *gris-gris*, in order that being deprived of their imaginary protecting influence, they might become timid and submissive, and want courage to attempt insurrection or acts of violence while on board ship.

When the bar of the Senegal happens to be in such a dangerous state that boats cannot pass it, any person wishing to have communication with the ships lying outside, finds little difficulty in hiring a negro to swim on board with a letter or small parcel. Before undertaking this perilous duty, he goes to the nearest Marabout, and purchases a *gris-gris* to protect him from sharks, for he dreads these animals more than he does the raging sea. Thus provided, he plunges into the surf with confidence; and if, as sometimes happens, he is never again seen or heard of, the Marabout explains his disappearance, by saying that he has been drowned, and that he ought to have procured a *gris-gris* aversive of that accident, in addition to the

other, which was not intended to possess a double virtue.

The habitual fear of death amongst the negroes is in contradiction to the general character of the inhabitants of the torrid zone. The Asiatics are well known to regard the hour of dissolution with serene indifference; and though a confirmed belief in the transmigration of souls may, in many cases, lead to this effect, its influence is by no means universal, because the numerous sectarians who refuse to admit that doctrine are equally placid in their last moments. It is only the people of hot climates that ever put themselves to death without any exciting cause, or assist in setting fire to their own funeral piles; and all religions have had the fewer martyrs the farther they have extended beyond the tropics.

Ulloa says, that the Peruvian Indians are insensible to the dread of dying, and that the Catholic priests try in vain to awaken their fears, by describing the terrors of hell, and the punishment of unbelievers in the world to come. May we not ascribe the fears of the negroes to the unsettled nature of their religious belief, and to the disturbance of imagination produced by the daily view of their hide-

ous fetiches or idols, which they are accustomed alternately to worship and to despise, according as the affairs in which they have solicited their assistance turn out prosperously, or the reverse?

Though the Marabouts often take an interested advantage of the influence which they have acquired, it must be admitted that the negroes derive considerable benefit from their intercourse with them. The notions of religion which they diffuse amongst their proselytes, are infinitely more reasonable and more favourable to morality than the *fetiche* superstitions of the country, and the instructions which they sometimes are able to communicate on other subjects have also a beneficial effect. Their impositions with respect to the *gris-gris* cannot be defended; but these seem more excusable, when it is considered, that the inventors of them have no other means of subsistence, and that it is perhaps the most harmless device that they can use to maintain an ascendancy over their proselytes. The term Marabout appears to be improperly applied to these Moorish priests, who in reality bear no resemblance to the fanatical and desperate impostors of that name who infest the towns and mosques

of Barbary, and, under the guise of affected inspiration, commit the most abominable excesses with impunity, the sacred character of their profession placing them beyond the pale of the law.

The trial by ordeal is very commonly adopted amongst those negroes who have not embraced Mahommedanism, though the practice itself is entirely in contradiction to the general spirit of their religion; for they imagine that the Supreme Being (whose existence all of them acknowledge,) is too exalted in his nature, and too far removed from them, to take any interest in their concerns, or to interfere in their behalf. How then can they expect that he should protect the innocent from the dangerous or fatal consequences of the ordeal? This kind of trial is instituted when an individual accused of any crime cannot prove his innocence by human testimony; and he is on some occasions obliged to submit to it, but in general he demands the ordeal as a means of clearing himself from suspicion, and in the latter case, it is always of a more severe and trying character than in the former.

Appeals to divine justice, by persons under false accusation, are common amongst most

uncivilized nations; but it is in West Africa and in India that they assume the most systematic character, are most universally accredited, and present the greatest variety of forms. The ceremony is performed in different ways in the Senegambia, in Guinea, in Congo, in Angola, and in Mozambique; and the inhabitants of all these countries have their respective tales of its miraculous efficacy. In some instances a bar of iron, or a ring of copper, made red-hot, is applied to the tongue of the accused person, who, should he be innocent, suffers no pain or harm from the fire.

Santos, speaking of this method in his History of Eastern Ethiopia, says, "What, however, is certainly shameful, some Christians have been known to subject their slaves to this ordeal; and of these, several have even, for three successive times, licked a red-hot bar without experiencing the least hurt." Bosman describes the same kind of ordeal as being frequently used in Guinea, but its result was very different, so far as his observation went. "All the accused," says he, "were declared guilty, and not without reason, for it would be strange indeed if red-hot copper would not burn the tongue."

It is not the less certain, however, that this ordeal by fire is often performed in India without any injury to the person who undergoes it, which we must attribute to the arts of the Brahmans, who doubtless secretly apply some preservative substance to the skin of the accused. The drinking of poison is also in common use throughout Africa, as a means of detecting supposed guilt, the suspected individual shortly expiring if he has really committed the crime laid to his charge, but if not, he experiences no bad effect from the draught. This may be regarded as the least artificial of all ordeals, so easy must it be for the conductor of the ceremony to administer a noxious or a harmless mixture, according as he is favourably disposed or otherwise towards the prisoner. The manner of this kind of ordeal amongst the negroes, is the following, according to Father Merolla. "The aforesaid oath Bolungo," says he, "is administered to the supposed traitor by a sort of wizard called Cangizumbo, who, making a certain composition out of the juice of herbs, serpent's flesh, pulp of fruit, and divers other things, gives it to the supposed delinquent to drink, who, if guilty, (as they tell you,) will immediately fall down in a

swoon or trembling to the ground, insomuch that if they did not presently give him an antidote, he would infallibly die away, but if not guilty, no harm would happen to him."

It seems extraordinary, that nearly all the ordeals in use amongst any people should be attended with pain or danger to those undergoing them. The detection of guilt is one thing, and the punishment of it another; and the first would be effected by an ordeal of a harmless nature as completely as by one of an opposite kind. The Brahmans alone seem to have partially adopted this idea; and though some of their ordeals are very severe, others bring no suffering to the accused person, be he guilty or innocent. Of this description are the trials by chewing of rice, and by the balance. In the first case, a small quantity of rice is put into the mouth of the suspected individual, which he is desired to chew. Should the fragments of the grain quickly become moist, and adhere together, he is declared innocent; but if, on the contrary, they continue dry and powdery, and are expelled when he breathes, his guilt is no longer considered doubtful.

This ordeal is seldom or never resorted to on important occasions; that of the balance is

of a more solemn nature, and is thus performed. The accused person, having fasted two days, is brought to the place of trial, and the attendant Brahmans begin the ceremony with prayers and sacrifices. He is then placed in one of the scales, while bricks and fragments of the sacred herba *darba* are put into the other, so as to bring the two into exact equilibrium. He now withdraws from the scale, and goes to perform certain ablutions, and on his return resumes his former position. A mantram, or invocation, is now said by the officiating Brahman, and if the scales continue to preserve the same equality as at first, the accused is considered innocent; but if the one is observed to outweigh the other, his guilt is supposed to be made manifest.

It would appear that ordeals have in all countries been the invention of the priesthood. Their profession everywhere authorizes them to declare to the people that the Deity will always interpose to prevent the punishment of an innocent person; and even though they may not be persuaded of this themselves, they rightly regard it as a doctrine worthy to be maintained elsewhere, because it is favourable to morality; while those amongst them who

aspire to secular consequence, insist that the management of ordeals shall rest in the hands of their fraternity; for, possessing this privilege, they may by a little artifice render the tests subservient to their interests and their wishes, and acquire the power of life and death, and of condemnation and acquittal, over a large proportion of their countrymen.

The negroes being, as already described, extremely indolent, and likewise very simple in their habits and tastes, we may easily suppose that they satisfy their personal wants at little expense of time or trouble. It is said, that in the neighbourhood of the rivers Senegal and Gambia, twenty days tillage of the soil in the sowing season will enable an individual to subsist in abundance throughout the succeeding year.

Maize, millet, yams, palm-oil, and fish, are the articles which chiefly compose the ordinary diet of the inhabitants of West Africa; but they sometimes vary these with game of different kinds, with respect to which they are not very select, for they consider elephant's flesh nearly as good as venison, and in some districts they esteem young dogs as great a delicacy as the Chinese do. However, their ge-

neral diet almost everywhere consists of grain and vegetables, and their drink is either water or palm-wine. Their huts are built of hurdle-work, covered with a coating of clay, and thatched with grass or leaves; and they are not encumbered inside with many pieces of furniture or cooking utensils. The shell of the calabash forms their usual drinking-cup.

In an old voyage in Churchill's Collection, the author describes an ordinary which he saw upon the coast of Africa, a kind of establishment which we should little expect to find in that country. The fare consisted of beef and dog's-flesh boiled together, and afterwards wrapped in a raw hide to prevent their cooling. The tavern-keeper sat under a large tree, where there was a plank to serve as a table for those travellers who might wish to dine at the place. The reckoning for one meal, everything included, was ten cowries, or about three-fourths of a farthing sterling.

The negroes having the entire disposal of their own time, it becomes curious to inquire how they employ it. Conversation holds a chief place with them, and in fact takes precedence of everything else. They are the most determined and unwearying talkers in

the world, and the men even exceed the women in this respect. The most frivolous story is lengthened by them into a tedious narration, and the minutest circumstances are dwelt upon with fatiguing prolixity; while the whole is accompanied with such animation of countenance, and such energetic action, that a person unacquainted with their language would suppose that they were discussing affairs of grand interest and importance.

We might naturally conclude, that a people who spend so much time in talking, and hearing each other talk, would abound in traditions and tales, and frequently make such the subject of their narratives. But the negroes are entirely destitute of these; and the things and events which occupy their minds, are exclusively those of the past day, or the passing moment, or are at least of comparatively recent occurrence. It is true that the unvarying tenor of their lives affords few events worth remembering, and few eras by which the antiquity of any fact may be determined. The earliest records and traditions of all nations consist chiefly of the history of battles, and of the exploits of heroes; but the negroes have always loved peace and tranquillity, and shun-

ned warfare even at the expense of their liberty, and they have therefore no martial achievements to form the groundwork of either their narratives or their national songs.

Which of us is not ready to execrate a state of warfare as a fertile source of misery to our species? but at the same time, when we hear of a nation that has never been engaged in it, and has no examples of personal bravery to record, we are led to form an humble estimate of its general character and condition. Is this inconsistency to be accounted for by the opinion which history has taught us to entertain of the human race? We know that men, both individually and collectively, are ever prone to encroach upon each other's rights and liberties, and to practise usurpation and unbounded tyranny, in a way that becomes insupportable to a bold and spirited people, and leads them to rebellion and to warfare in defence of their persons and privileges; and we cannot easily believe that any nation has always escaped oppression, and never been called upon to resist insult or invasion; and consequently, when we find that its traditions or annals record no struggles of the kind, we at once conclude that it has been in the habit of quietly

and basely yielding to the hand of power, whenever that has been stretched forth to enslave or destroy it.

The Abbé Proyart, speaking of the negroes of Congo and Loango, remarks that they have an excellent memory. "They make no use however of the faculty (continues he) for transmitting to future ages what passes amongst themselves that is memorable, assuming as a principle that they should confine themselves to what is strictly necessary, as well for knowledge as for the wants of life. They all live in regard to history in that indifference which characterises the inhabitants of our country places, who know no more of what passed in France under Louis the Great, than under Julius Cæsar. If you ask them why they do not preserve the remembrance of what has been done by their fathers, they will answer, that it signifies little to know how the dead have lived; the main point is that the living should be honest people."

These seem to be the opinions of nearly all the other nations inhabiting West Africa; and it will probably be a long time before any of them think of collecting annals, unless the Marabouts should help them to do this, and condescend to write these in the Arabic language. The Chilians of

South America form an extraordinary contrast to the negroes in this respect. Amongst them the people of every district appoint an individual to preserve the traditions of the country, which is his sole duty and employment; and in order that he may perfectly retain them in his memory, he makes a practice of frequently repeating them aloud to the sound of a drum. He must also instruct a certain number of pupils in this kind of oral history, so that his knowledge of past events may not perish when he dies, or become confused and inexact from the decline of his faculties when he grows old.

The amusements which the negroes most esteem next to conversation, are music and dancing, in neither of which they particularly excel. Their musical instruments are drums, flutes, and horns, and a kind of rude guitar. They have also professional and itinerant musicians called Guiriots. These people hire themselves by the day or month to any one that is disposed to entertain them, and their business is to accompany him wherever he goes, and to sing his praises and proclaim his virtues (as impartially as European tombstones do those of the dead) to the bystanders. Persons of wealth and consequence always carry several of them in

their train, and make a practice of often giving them presents to encourage them to exert their powers of adulation, which however are at best of a very low kind, consisting merely of repeated exclamations that their employer is rich or generous, or of noble birth, or that he is a great hero.

The guiriot, while engaged in this kind of recitative, beats a small drum, the only advantage of which is, that it sometimes drowns his voice, and relieves the ear from the wearisomeness of a strain of uninterrupted tautology. The negroes, though they derive much enjoyment from the performances of the guiriots, nevertheless share in that prejudice against public musicians which is so universal amongst men in every state of society. The guiriots, when they die, are considered unworthy of honourable burial, and their corpses are usually placed upright in a hollow tree, or thrown into the nearest thicket, and covered with rubbish.

One very remarkable social institution is described by Golberry as existing in the negro nation called Foulahs, inhabiting the coast in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone. It is named the Purrah tribunal, and is a secret association, in some respects resembling freemasonry, and

in others the Catholic inquisition. The candidate for admission must be thirty years old, and his friends and relations who may already have been initiated, must guarantee his fidelity, and swear to put him to death should he violate his engagements. These preliminaries being adjusted, he is removed from his usual place of residence, and made to inhabit a solitary hut in a thick forest. Here he continues several weeks, and is daily supplied with provisions by masked attendants, who visit him at certain hours only. Nor may he quit his hut at any time under the penalty of death. The required period of seclusion having elapsed, he is subjected to a variety of proofs of the most fearful kind, in order to try to the utmost his courage and constancy, after which he is duly admitted a member of the tribunal, having first sworn that he will never divulge its mysteries and secrets.

It is said that those individuals whose imprudent curiosity has induced them to penetrate into the secret wood which forms the scene of initiation, have always disappeared, and have never afterwards been heard of; and that when any member of the tribunal violates his oath, he is invariably assassinated, and that too sometimes in public, and even in his own house, in the midst

of his relations, none of whom ever attempt to defend him, or to save his life. The chief business of the Purrah tribunal appears to be to watch over the public security, to decide upon peace and war, and to punish obnoxious individuals. It seems an institution little calculated to do good; and we may well suppose that its members abuse their prerogatives, for secret justice too often becomes open oppression, while the deposition of the civil authority in unknown hands, so far from restraining the wicked, makes them on the contrary consider themselves free from responsibility, and amenable to no one.

No monuments of human art or labour are found in West Africa, though we might reasonably expect the contrary; for the negroes, fixed to the soil which gave them birth, and obtaining all the necessaries of life with trifling exertion, are in a favourable condition to erect buildings, and to employ themselves in the formation of some memorials of their having once existed. Yet the whole country presents no monument of their own construction of ten years standing, or solid enough to resist a strong tornado; if we perhaps except a few small mosques, composed of unbaked bricks, which

the Marabouts have induced them to build in some of their large villages. The only antiquities that exist in West Africa, are the remains of several stone crosses, which the Portuguese erected upon the most prominent parts of the coast, when they were engaged in exploring it at the end of the fifteenth century.

There is every reason to believe that the negroes have remained several thousand years in the state in which we now find them. No foreign people have ever entered their country, or formed settlements in it, except Europeans; who, having confined themselves entirely to the coasts, and having always been few in number, their presence has exerted no influence upon the character of that part of the population which has had no direct intercourse with them. Nor do the negroes seem disposed to change their manners or mode of life, or to adopt new ideas; and it seems probable that in the event of the conquest of the country by any foreign nation, they would always continue a distinct people, indifferent to despotism, if they were allowed to lead a life of indolence and ease, and willing to sacrifice everything for the enjoyment of peace and personal security.

Happily for the people of West Africa, the

climate of their country is a safeguard against foreign invasion, more certain and effectual than armies or fortifications could ever be. Had it not been for this, their territories would long since have been overrun by different European nations, and would have proved a theatre for reacting the scenes of cruelty and oppression which compose the early history of America. That soil which yet remains unbroken, would have been furrowed and excavated in search of gold; and the negroes, forced by fire and sword to labour for the benefit of their conquerors, would have coveted a state of slavery in the West Indies, as an amelioration of their lot, and as a refuge from domestic toil and misery. Nor can we consider them as altogether safe from foreign disturbance so long as we hear plans proposed for the civilization of Africa. It is not difficult to comprehend the real meaning and object of these, and it is equally easy to anticipate what would follow their successful execution. Let then the generous nations of Europe allow the Africans to enjoy their barbarism a few centuries longer.

The continent of America has already been nearly depopulated of its aborigines by the introduction of the blessings of civilization.

The West Indian archipelago, from the same cause, no longer contains a single family of its primitive inhabitants. South Africa will soon be in a similar condition—and the islanders of the Pacific Ocean are rapidly diminishing in numbers from the ravages of European diseases, and the despotism of self-interested and fanatical missionaries. It surely is time that the work of destruction should cease; and since long and melancholy experience has proved us to be invariably unsuccessful in rendering happier, wiser, or better, the barbarians whom we have visited or conquered, we may now conscientiously let them alone and turn a correcting hand towards ourselves, and seek to repress those evils which the march of intellect has long been engendering, lest all vestiges of good should disappear from amongst us, and leave us without any qualities but our avarice, our selfishness, and our vices.

# EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN WEST AFRICA.

THE African trade had its commencement about the middle of the fifteenth century, under the auspices of Prince Henry of Portugal. He built a fort in the island Arguin, in the year 1455, for the residence and protection of his commercial agents; and this was the first establishment formed by Europeans in West Africa. It doubtless originated in a voyage of discovery, made by Nuno Tristan, in 1441, when he advanced as far as Sierra Leone, and brought back to Portugal a quantity of gold-dust and ten negroes, both of which he had obtained from the Moors, as a ransom for some prisoners of their nation whom he had captured in the neighbourhood of the Rio del Ouro. Some authors assert that these were the first negroes ever imported into Europe, but this is disputed by others, who pretend that the Normans and Castilians visited and explored a consi-

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derable part of the west coast of Africa so early as the thirteenth century. It is at least certain that it was the view of those productions of the country that first gave the Portuguese a high idea of the advantages to be derived from the African trade, and made them duly value the discoveries which had already been effected by the zeal of Prince Henry. Accordingly King John the Second, of Portugal, sent Diego de Arambusa, with twelve vessels, and a proportionable number of people, to build a fort and form a settlement on that part of the coast of Guinea where gold might appear to be most abundant. Don Diego, on reaching his place of destination, had an interview with the king of the country, whose name was Karamansa, and requested permission to instruct him and his subjects in the Christian religion, and also to build a house for the accommodation of the seamen. Karamansa readily assented to the first proposition, but they found much difficulty in persuading him to agree to the second. However, his objections were at length overcome, and the Portuguese began to prepare materials for the erection of a fort; but, unluckily, they assailed with their pickaxes a rock which was regarded as a *fetiche* by the negroes, whose proposed conversion Diego had either deferred or altogether forgot[illegible] and

they took up arms in defence of their idol, and drove the strangers away. Nevertheless things were soon accommodated between the parties; and the building was at length completed, and received the appellation of St. George del Mina, which it has retained to the present day. The negroes of that neighbourhood being great traders in gold-dust, the Portuguese erroneously supposed that there were rich mines not far off, and gave their castle the above name; which, however, is not at all appropriate, for no mines of any description exist within many miles of it.

But this establishment, so far from securing to the Portuguese the exclusive trade of West Africa, drew the attention of rival nations to that part of the world, and rendered them desirous of partaking of its luerative and enticing commerce. Gold-dust, ivory, and spices, were at that time considered the representatives of wealth, and the most valuable and marketable of all commodities; and though West Africa had never afforded any of the last article, the earlier navigators naturally enough supposed that it would be found to exist in a climate apparently so favourable to its production. So early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Spaniards, English, French, and Dutch, had

began to send private ships to the coast of Africa; and the neighbouring seas became a scene of continual warfare between the different traders, who exercised a kind of piracy upon each other, regardless whether their respective nations were at peace or in a state of hostility. However, they sometimes found a bond of union in their jealousy of the Portuguese, who endeavoured to monopolise the commerce of the whole coast, upon the principle that it belonged to them on account of their priority of discovery and possession: but the rights of nations, real or imaginary, were little attended to or respected by those who had so strong an interest in infringing them; and the Portuguese were harassed in all quarters, and perhaps derived less profit from the African trade than any other people who had at that period engaged in it.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, the trade of West Africa began to assume an organised form. Previous to that time it had been carried on exclusively by private adventurers, (except in so far as the Portuguese were concerned,) none of whom had any assigned limits for their operations, nor any restraint upon their actions beyond what an inherent

sense of equity might create. Hence the natives were daily made the victims of their tyranny, frauds, and extortions; and in some parts of the coast, the mere appearance of a ship made the inhabitants take flight and conceal themselves, lest they should be kidnapped for slaves, or even carried away from their homes by force. The masters and crews of the trading vessels were mostly unprincipled and rapacious characters, insensible to humanity, and regardless of everything but private interest; for persons of good reputation could not easily be engaged to undertake voyages of so dangerous and uncertain a nature; and hence, these assumed the character of plundering expeditions rather than of commercial ones. But when the different European nations instituted chartered companies for the management of the African trade, with exclusive privileges, many of the disorders above alluded to were remedied; and the agents in the employ of the companies being responsible to their superiors, a system of comparative equity and of mutual forbearance began to prevail in their commercial transactions—and though a spirit of rivalry might continue amongst them, there was an end to all acts of open hostility.

It would be out of place here, to enter into any kind of history of the rise and growth of the various mercantile companies who have at different times formed establishments upon the west coast of Africa, or to give an account of the vicissitudes and difficulties which they have severally experienced in the course of their existence. Nor would this be an easy task in so far as concerns the describing of their internal economy, which has in most instances been kept a profound secret, for reasons too obvious to require explanation; and nearly the same difficulty will impede the execution of my present purpose, which is to offer a view of the condition, ideas, and mode of life, of Europeans residing upon the coast of Africa. The deficiency of materials of the kind is chiefly owing to the indolent and unobserving spirit of the individuals who have been in the employ of the different companies, few of whom have committed to writing, or at least published, any account of their abode in that part of the world—though some of them perhaps were deterred from doing either by a conscientious unwillingness to disclose the private affairs which officially fell under their management.

Should it be objected that the general character and situation of the European residents of the coast of Africa are neither calculated to excite much interest, nor worthy to be described, I shall reply, that whatever adds in the smallest degree to our knowledge of man and human life, is valuable and instructive, be it pleasing or the reverse. The botanist never refuses to admit a plant into his collection, because it has a mean or unsightly aspect.

All the European establishments upon the coast of Africa, by whatever nation they were formed, had the same general object in view, and were conducted in the same general way. In speaking of them, I use the past tense, because, since the abolition of the slave trade, they have universally and exceedingly declined in importance and value, and because many of them have latterly been altogether abandoned. As soon as the parties concerned had fixed upon the site of their proposed commercial establishment, they began to erect a fort of greater or less magnitude, having previously obtained permission to that effect from the natives. The most convenient situation for a building of the kind was considered to be at the confluence of a river with the sea, or upon

an island lying within a few miles of the coast. In the first case, there was the advantage of inland navigation; and in the second, that of the security and defensibleness of an insular position, besides its being more cool and healthy than any other.

The walls of the fort always enclosed a considerable space of ground, upon which were built the necessary magazines for the reception of merchandise, and also barracks for the soldiers and artificers, and a depôt for slaves; so that, in the event of external hostilities, the gates might be shut, and the persons and the property belonging to the establishment placed in security. The quarters for the officers and agents employed at the factory were in general erected upon the ramparts, or at least adjoining them; while the negroes in their service, and any others that might be attracted to the spot, placed their huts outside of the walls of the fort, but under the protection of its guns.

The command of the establishment was vested in the hands of one individual, who had various subordinates, according to the extent of the trade carried on at the place; and if the troops who garrisoned the fort exceeded twenty or thirty, a commissioned officer usually had

charge of them. The most remarkable forts were St. George del Mina, already mentioned as having been erected by the Portuguese, though it subsequently fell into the hands of the Dutch — Cape Coast Castle, the principal establishment of the English — Fort Louis, at the mouth of the Senegal, generally occupied by the French — and Goree, situated upon an island of the same name, near Cape Verde. Most of these forts mounted from fifty to sixty pieces of cannon, and contained large reservoirs for water, and were not only impregnable to the negroes, but capable of standing a regular siege by an European force.

The principal fort of each company was the residence of the governor, or director-general whom they had appointed to manage their affairs. His office was one of considerable responsibility, and involved a variety of important duties. He had the superintendence of the whole commerce carried on with the negroes, whether at head-quarters or at outposts, and the regulation of the prices of goods, and the rates of exchange, and of the kind and quantity of merchandise to be annually furnished for the African trade by his employers in Europe. It was also his business

to extend as much as possible the sphere of the company's commerce, to conciliate the negro princes, and even the common people; to inquire into the conduct of subordinate officers and agents, and to visit any parts of the country where his presence might be necessary or advantageous to the interests of his superiors.

The negroes have always been in the practice of exacting from Europeans certain duties, called *customs*, for the liberty of trading. The regulation of these was one of the most troublesome duties which the director had to perform, for the native princes were ever ready to invent pretexts for increasing them; and it sometimes happened, that if their unreasonable demands were not complied with, they would shut up the passes of the country, and altogether prevent any traffic with the interior —a measure which, if long persisted in, never failed to prove ruinous to the factories on the coast. The negro chiefs being naturally capricious and disposed for extortion, they frequently fomented quarrels with their European residents, for the sole purpose of forcing them to purchase a reconciliation by presents; and the number of foreign nations possessing establishments in their country encouraged them to

act in this manner; because, if they quarrelled with one, they had no difficulty in opening a trade with its neighbour on equally advantageous terms.

Some of the governors were accustomed to live in considerable splendour and external dignity. They kept open table for their subordinates in office, and had guards to attend them, and were honoured with salutes of ordnance whenever they left their stations or returned to them. The French director-general of the Senegal was perhaps more highly favoured in these respects than any other person in a similar situation; and his authority was almost despotic, extending to life and death, and permitting him to depose any of his officers without assigning a reason to the offending individual. But the power of the governors was necessarily very great in all the establishments in West Africa, to whatever nation they might belong.

The Dutch company appointed a council of senior factors to assist their director-general in his deliberations; but, according to Bosman, it scarcely ever happened that any one of them ventured to dissent from him, or to urge any objections to what he might propose, so fearful

were they of offending him, and suffering trouble or persecution on account of their sincerity. It seems to have been much the same at all the other factories; and no man employed in them had any chance of promotion or happiness, if he was so unfortunate as to displease the person holding the supreme authority there.

The individuals next in importance to the director or governor, were the factors, who ranked according to their standing in the company's service. The seniors generally remained at head-quarters, and had the immediate management of the trade there, and the care of the supplies of European merchandise which were always kept in store. The junior factors were employed in carrying on the traffic in the interior of the country, which they did sometimes by ascending the rivers in armed vessels, and exchanging various articles for slaves, gold-dust, and ivory, with the negroes inhabiting the neighbourhood; and sometimes by establishing themselves for several months in a large town or populous district, and, as it were, keeping a shop to which the natives might resort for traffic.

This last mode of conducting business re-

quired greater ability and circumspection than the first, because the person engaged in it, and all his property, were at the mercy of the people amongst whom he happened to be residing; and if he in any way seriously offended them, intentionally or not, he was liable to be robbed and maltreated, and even put to death. Duties involving so much risk and personal hardship were, it may be supposed, little in request; but, nevertheless, the hope of being sooner or later transferred to more agreeable ones, induced the junior factors to exert their zeal and activity, in order that the director-general might reward them with speedy promotion.

The European subordinates of the establishment consisted of clerks, book-keepers, warehousemen, artificers, mechanics, gunners, and private soldiers, all of whom had particular quarters assigned for their abode, and lived under military discipline. The soldiers employed in the service of the different African companies were mostly invalids, and persons who had been dismissed from the army on account of bad conduct. Destitute of the means of subsistence at home, such men willingly engaged to go to the coast of Africa,

where they knew that they would be permitted to lead a life of ease, indolence, and licentiousness, and be exposed to no danger except that of a deadly climate, which was in reality the most certain and inevitable one that they could anywhere encounter.

Few of the troops in any of the forts were fit for active duty, which was of the less consequence, because they were seldom or never required to fight except upon the ramparts of the place in which they might be quartered, and not often even there. Hence they spent their time in smoking, in drinking palm-wine, and in gaming, and were generally carried off by fever or dissipation within two years after their arrival in the country. A stranger on first visiting any of the African forts felt that there was something both horrible and ludicrous in the appearance of its garrison, for the individuals composing it appeared ghastly, debilitated, and diseased, to a degree that is unknown in other climates; and their tattered and soiled uniforms, resembling each other only in meanness and not in colour, suggested the idea of their wearers being a band of drunken deserters, or of starved and maltreated prisoners of war.

In addition to the European artificers and

mechanics of several descriptions who were entertained in the African establishments, there was an inferior, though not less useful set of people, called by the French *Laptots*. These were negroes who hired themselves for employment, and were willing to do all kinds of work, though they chiefly devoted themselves to boating, and to the unloading of ships. They were a strong, hardy, cheerful race, free from the general indolence of their countrymen, patient of hardships in an incredible degree, dexterous in navigating rivers, and excellent swimmers and divers. Many of them were always in the pay of the different companies, and without their assistance it would have been impossible to carry on the trade; for they attended the factors wherever they went, whether by land or water, serving them as guides and porters in the first case, and as mariners in the latter, and faithfully protecting them and their property, and often fighting boldly in defence of both. The Laptots generally lived outside of the fort, except when employed in the capacity of soldiers, which sometimes became necessary, on account of the mortality amongst its European garrison.

The objects which the different companies had in view in erecting forts upon the coast of Africa, were one and the same, viz. that they might monopolise the trade of the neighbouring country, and also have depôts for the reception of foreign merchandise, and of the articles obtained in exchange for it.

Each company was in the practice of annually sending a certain number of ships to its respective establishments, freighted with European goods suitable for traffic; while its factors in Africa had in the mean time been collecting slaves, ivory, gum-arabic, and other productions of the country; so that the vessels on their arrival suffered no detention, but always found a return cargo ready for them. Before this system was adopted, the African trade was carried on by private ships, which made a coasting voyage, and touched at every place which seemed likely to afford produce of any kind.

Many months were often spent in this way before a moderate cargo could be obtained; for, owing to the smallness of the negro villages on the coast, and the general indolence and want of foresight of their inhabitants, the traders were seldom able to purchase more than

a few slaves and elephant's teeth at any one of them; and it not unfrequently happened that they found nothing at all to repay their time and trouble. This tedious and tantalizing kind of navigation always proved fatal to many of those engaged in it. The seamen were attacked with scurvy, or fell victims to the unhealthiness of the climate, or sunk under their fatigues; and their vessels, without hands to manœuvre them, were left to the mercy of the winds and waves. At the same time, the slaves who might be collected on board, and whom it was necessary to keep in close confinement on account of the nearness of the shore, shared in the sickness, and rapidly perished from pestilential disorders.

Barbot, describing a vessel in a situation of this kind, says, that the air between decks was often so foul that a candle would not burn, and that the surgeon would faint on being exposed to it. From the prevalence of calms and currents upon the west coast of Africa, the navigation there is remarkably tedious and uncertain, and few of those who traded in the manner just described were able to accomplish the entire voyage in less than eight or nine months. These disadvantages led to the

construction of forts by several European nations; and if the expense of maintaining these absorbed a large part of the profits of African commerce, its gains were at least rendered more certain and less fluctuating than they had formerly been.

Nevertheless, the formation of permanent commercial establishments on the west coast of Africa did not deter individuals from privately engaging in the trade there, though the exclusive charters of the different companies rendered this unlawful; but these interlopers (as they were called) employing well-armed and fast-sailing ships and experienced mariners, often made very successful voyages, notwithstanding the efforts that were used to capture them, and prevent their trafficking with the negroes, who always secretly favoured them, inasmuch as they obtained from them foreign goods at a cheaper rate than they could do at any of the factories whatever.

The most determined and systematic interlopers were the English and the Portuguese; and there was scarcely an establishment upon the whole coast that had not to complain of invaded rights and severe commercial losses, in consequence of the extensive contraband trade

carried on by these two nations. It was one of the chief and most troublesome duties of a director-general to check this illicit trade, and to discover and punish those who were engaged in it; which he commonly failed in doing, because the negroes whom he employed to watch their manœuvres were easily bribed to neglect that duty, and even to assist the aggressors in purchasing ivory and slaves, and conveying them on board ship. However, the interlopers mostly attached themselves to the trade in gold-dust, on account of the portableness and superior value of that article; and Bosman complains that in his time, 1700, they annually carried off nearly one half of the whole quantity brought by the negroes for traffic from the interior of the country.

Though the forts were principally employed as places of safe deposit for merchandise received from Europe, or collected at outposts, they were also generally the scene of a considerable trade, being resorted to for that purpose, not only by the coast negroes, but often also by dealers from the interior of the country, who would bring slaves, ivory, and gold-dust for traffic. Persons of this description were always honourably, and even ceremoni-

ously received by the governor, or by the factors, and conciliated in every possible way, lest they might carry their goods to another market. They were invited to enter the fort, and were treated with liqueurs, sweetmeats, and presents, and urged to drink freely; and no sooner did they show symptoms of confusion of ideas, than the factors proposed to trade with them, and displayed the articles which they were disposed to give in exchange for their slaves, &c. The unsuspicious negro merchant, dazzled by the variety of tempting objects placed before him, and exhilarated by wine or brandy, was easily led to conclude a bargain little advantageous to himself; and before he had fully recovered his senses, his slaves, ivory, and gold-dust were transferred to the stores of the factory, and he was obliged to be contented with what he had in his moments of inebriety agreed to accept in exchange for them.

The factors used to urge, in justification of this mode of proceeding, that it is nearly impossible to induce a negro to traffic while he is sober; and that his caprice and irresolution are so great, that he will spend hours, and even days, in cavilling about the smallest bargain, and perhaps at last go away without conclud-

ing it upon any terms; and it must be admitted, that nearly every one who has written concerning African commerce agrees in the above remark, and in saying that it requires the utmost patience and management to traffic successfully with the blacks, because they are the most incessant talkers and the most importunate beggars in the world; and that if they are not calmly borne with, and mildly treated, they will break off business altogether, even though they should be losers by so doing. M. Saugnier, a Senegal merchant, makes the following remarks upon this subject:—"If they (the native traders) be negroes, they are plied with liquor; for though Mahommedans, they will accept aniseed-water or brandy. They drink till they lose their reason, and then strike their bargains. Should they be Moors, sugar and water is given them at discretion, and sometimes brandy; although followers of Mahommed also, they will not refuse it, particularly the princes. It sometimes happens that they are regaled in vain; it is therefore prudent in the merchant who is dealing with them, to give them nothing to drink till he is nearly sure of coming to an agreement."

But the nature and variety of the articles

which the negroes demand in exchange for their commodities, adds still farther to the tediousness of the traffic. They do not sell them for money, or for any one standard sort of merchandise. On the contrary, eighty or a hundred different kinds of manufactures were necessary for carrying on the slave-trade; the principal of which were, Guinea blues, fire-arms, gunpowder, linens, glassware, salt, coral, iron, cutlery, dyed wool, beads, scarlet cloth, carpenter's tools, liquors, spices, small shot, trinkets, &c. The price of any article was not calculated in money, but in an imaginary circulating medium called a *bar*, which varied in value upon different parts of the coast: and though it was customary for the factors to enter into an agreement with the negro dealers, that certain articles should be considered equivalent to the value of a slave during the current year, and that they should always consent to receive such when offered to them; still this regulation could not be made to extend to ivory, gold-dust, and other produce, and was necessarily subject to various modifications, depending upon the particular taste and wants of the seller. On the Senegal, sixteen different articles formed the established price of a slave.

However, it often happened that the dealer would object to some of these, because he did not require them, and would propose that others should be substituted, which necessarily led to a long discussion as to what might properly be considered an equivalent for the rejected articles; and it was the changeableness and pertinacity of the negroes upon such points, that proved the grand impediment to the despatch of business, and rendered the distribution of spirituous liquors amongst them necessary, to make them reasonable and accommodating.

Had the negroes demanded articles of intrinsic value, or of expensive manufacture, in exchange for their commodities, the trade could not have been carried on with any profit either by companies or by private individuals. But the merchandise required for traffic was of the vilest and cheapest description, the passion of the Africans running upon ornamental things rather than useful ones. With the exception of fire-arms, Guinea blues, gunpowder, and spirituous liquors, all the European merchandise employed in the trade consisted of fancy articles, the original cost of which was hardly worth computing. Glass beads of various kinds, mock coral, small mirrors, tobacco-pipes,

dyed wool, black pepper, &c. made up a large part of the exchanges given for slaves, ivory, and gold-dust; nor does it appear that the negroes ever became sensible of the utter worthlessness of the objects which they were accustomed to receive from foreign traders, or tired of the frivolous toys which the latter annually imported for their use and consumption. But it is one of the features of the negro character to be pleased with puerilities; while amongst the women, the passion for ornaments and trinkets is so great, that the lover cannot hope to be successful in his suit, nor the husband happy at home, unless the mistress and wife are occasionally conciliated and gratified by presents of the kind. Hence, the elephant's tusks, which had, perhaps, been the fruit of several days of dangerous hunting, or the gold-dust which had been collected with harassing labour, were often exchanged by their possessors for a few snuff-boxes, coral bracelets, and strings of glass beads.

One of the most troublesome duties that devolved upon the factors was the examination of the gold-dust brought for sale by the negroes, in order to ascertain its genuineness and purity. At the commencement of the European trade upon the coast of Africa, nothing of this kind

was found to be necessary, because the natives at that time never thought of adulterating their gold-dust; but the Portuguese having instructed them in that pernicious art, as has already been mentioned, it soon came into general use, and was in many places practised with so much expertness, that none but a metallurgist, or an experienced trader, could detect the imposition. The gold-dust was often combined with foreign substances similar in appearance to itself, but these latter were sometimes passed off even without any admixture whatever of the precious metal. At other times, the gold was presented under the form of ingots, which were hollow within, and filled with some baser metal, so that the fraud could only be discovered by cutting them in pieces. Chemical tests were seldom employed by the factors to try the purity of gold, because the venders objected to the loss of metal which attended their use, and imagined that they injured the quality of those portions of it which were exposed to their operation.

All the gold that occurs upon the west coast of Africa is found in the state of dust, the grains of which vary in size, but are seldom very large. The gold-dust is obtained by

washing the soil, the negroes having no idea of the working of mines; nor is it supposed that they ever seek for such, because they rest contented with the particles of metal that lie near the surface of the ground, and probably are not aware that they would find these in greater abundance by digging to any considerable depth. The vast quantities of gold-dust continually brought to the coast for the purpose of traffic, and the undiminishing supply in the market, notwithstanding the amount exported, early struck the attention of European traders, and led them to conclude that various mines of inestimable richness must exist in the interior of the country. To acquire a knowledge of the situation of these became, therefore, an object of the highest interest and importance; and the different chartered companies always took care to direct the attention of their agents to that point, under the hope that they might eventually get possession of some of the mines, and render them extremely productive, by opening and working them in the European manner. But unexpected difficulties occurred in obtaining the desired information, and up to the present day nothing very accurate is known respecting the quarters where the West African

gold is chiefly produced. The negroes showed from the first a strong unwillingness to give Europeans any details upon the subject, doubtless suspecting what their intentions were, and convinced that there would no longer be peace, hope, or happiness for themselves, if foreign nations were once allured by the prospect of riches to take possession of their country; and they have hitherto kept their secret with commendable resolution, in spite of all the artifices that have been used to extort it from them, and all the expeditions for the discovery of the gold-mines that have at different times been made by interested persons. It even appears, that in many parts of the country, the digging and gathering of gold by the negroes themselves, is restricted to certain periods, in order that the metal may not become so common as to diminish in value, or that its abundance may not excite the cupidity of the neighbouring states, and lead them to attempt the invasion and conquest of the territory producing it. According to Barbot, there was in his time a rich gold-mine situated upon a hill in the district of Commendo, which the negroes had deified and pronounced sacred, with a view to prevent its ever being opened—the authors of

this politic measure knowing that superstition would go farther to preserve the place inviolate, than all the force and vigilance of human laws.

In 1716, the director-general of the French African Company sent a person named Campagnon into Bambouk, a kingdom bordering upon the Senegal river, and said to abound in gold in an extraordinary degree; and what rendered this report the more probable, was the extreme jealousy with which its inhabitants regarded foreigners of every description, whom they seldom would allow to travel through their country. Campagnon's mission was therefore a delicate and hazardous one, but by his address, boldness, and conciliating manners, he accomplished it in safety; though the negroes of Bambouk, suspecting his design in visiting their territories, more than once proposed to put him to death. His chief object was to obtain specimens of the soil for future analysis, and he told the natives that he wished to purchase of them a few baskets-full of earth to make bowls for tobacco-pipes. They found some difficulty in believing that he had come so far for so insignificant a purpose; but, nevertheless, he not only succeeded in procuring what he wanted, but also acquired a

great deal of information respecting the places where gold most abounded, and the manner in which the negroes were accustomed to collect it. The fascinating accounts which Campagnon gave of the mineral riches of Bambouk, and the specimens of the soil which he produced in proof of his assertions, made the director-general form a plan for the conquest of that kingdom, which, however, happily for both negroes and Europeans, was never put into execution — for it is easy to perceive that the climate would have rendered its accomplishment impossible.

Thus the African mines of gold are not likely ever to fall into the possession of Europeans, though they doubtless exceed in richness any other in the world. Gold-dust was found in considerable quantities in America, and in some of the West India islands, for many years subsequent to their discovery and occupation by the Spaniards; but the supply soon diminished, and during the last century very little has been obtained in either quarter, although European industry has been exerted in collecting it. Africa, on the other hand, has yielded immense quantities of gold-dust for nearly four centuries, besides what she has retained for her own use; and it would appear that the metal in that form

now abounds in the country to a degree that was never before suspected. The late missions to the kingdom of Ashantee have acquainted us with the commonness of gold there, and in other parts of the interior of Africa; and one of the laws of Commassie, the capital of Ashantee, is calculated to give a high idea of the quantity of gold-dust in daily circulation amongst its inhabitants. Whoever picks up any gold-dust that may have been dropped in the market-place is punished with death; because the washing and sifting of its soil forms a part of the royal revenues, and is never to be resorted to except in great exigencies of the state. It may be necessary to mention that the circulating medium of the Ashantees is gold-dust, which they carry about with them in quills; and in paying for any article that they may have purchased, they pour the required quantity of gold-dust into the palm of the merchant, when a few particles generally fall to the ground, or are swept away by the wind. It is these that form the treasure which the king reserves for himself, and which is daily trodden under foot by his subjects, though they may not otherwise touch it, except at the risk of their lives. We must suppose that the Ashantees are as careful of their money as most other

people, yet, as they drop so much of it in the daily transactions of life, that their market-place becomes a mine of gold, it is evident that a prodigious quantity of it must be in constant circulation amongst them.

It might have been expected that the continual drain of gold-dust which Africa has experienced for several centuries, would have exhausted her supplies, and forced her inhabitants to seek the precious metal in its original mines; but they have never yet done this: all the gold which they possess or exchange in trade, whether in grains or in masses, being decidedly native, and such as they have obtained by sifting the sands of rivers, or by washing the soil of their country. The mineral ore, and the larger masses of the native metal, still remain untouched and unexposed; and all the gold that Africa has hitherto produced is no more than the *débris* or *detritus* of the latter. It is the deadliness of the climate alone that has so long preserved West Africa from foreign cupidity; for she doubtless contains treasures which would rival those of the New World, but which can scarcely come into the possession of any European nation, except through the hands of the negroes themselves; who, however, are not likely

to shake off the indolence with which they are so often reproached, and devote themselves to mining for the benefit of foreigners, until they receive more advantage and less injury from an intercourse with them than they have hitherto done.

But to return to the general duties of European factors in West Africa. The seniors, as has already been remarked, were usually stationed at the forts to conduct the trade there, while upon the juniors devolved the more fatiguing and hazardous duty of carrying on the inland commerce, or of making coasting voyages to collect ivory, rice, and millet, and other productions of the country. Two principal expeditions of the former description annually sailed up the Senegal, from the French establishment of Fort Louis, situated at the mouth of that river. The object of the one was to trade for slaves at Galam, and of the other to purchase gum-arabic of the Moors of the Desert; the place of rendezvous for that purpose being Serenpate or Terrier Rouge.

Galam is about three hundred miles above the mouth of the Senegal, and the French had a factory there called Fort Joseph, where the slave-trade was carried on very extensively. The

company sent a number of vessels every year to bring down to Fort Louis the slaves that had been purchased by their agent at Galam; and one or two factors were usually placed in command of the expedition, which was one of the most dangerous and unpleasant that can be imagined. It always took place at the commencement of the rains, when the Senegal overflows, and is navigable by flat-bottomed sloops of one hundred tons burthen. But if the swelling of the river facilitates navigation in one respect, it renders it more difficult in others; for the rapidity of the current is then great, and it bears along vast quantities of driftwood of the largest size, by which the bows of the vessels are continually liable to be stove in. Nor is it almost ever possible to make use of sails in this voyage, the wind during the rainy season being too squally and shifting to be available for nautical purposes in a river where the smallest deviation from the proper course would run the sloop aground upon a sand-bank, or heave her broadside against heaps of floating timber. It is by the tow-line alone that any progress can be made up the river; and the services of that class of negroes, already described under the name of Laptots, were here peculiarly valuable; for European

mariners are never employed in the navigation of the Senegal, the fatigues of which would quickly destroy them. The Laptots, walking in a line upon the bank of the river, haul along the sloop or boat, or push her off when she gets aground, or extricate her from driftwood, or repair her when she suffers injury. These men endure incredible fatigues, which they alleviate by songs and recitations uttered in cadence, and they seldom enjoy any rest until darkness requires that they should suspend their labours till the ensuing morning.

Nor was the situation of the factor who undertook the voyage a more enviable one, though he was merely a spectator of the toils of his subordinates. Miserably accommodated in a small vessel full of merchandise and people — destitute of the common conveniences of life — forced to live upon the most indifferent food — and exposed to a noxious climate — he found no consolation except in looking forward to the end of the voyage, which generally lasted from twenty to thirty days. He also had duties to perform which demanded the exercise of the greatest forbearance and circumspection. It was customary for the various petty sovereigns whose territories border upon the Senegal, to

exact tribute or presents for the liberty of trading, from all foreign vessels that passed up the river; and they never failed to invent reasons for increasing the amount of these, particularly if they thought that they could frighten the factor into compliance. The utmost steadiness in resisting encroachments of the kind was necessary on his part; while, on the other hand, the interests of his employers required that he should avoid giving offence to the princes of the country, who had it in their power to throw the greatest impediments in the way of commerce. Things were therefore seldom adjusted without long disputes and wearisome detention. The Marabouts, whom most of the negro kings entertained about their persons, always encouraged them to practise extortions, both because they hated Christians, and because they hoped to share in the spoil that might be obtained. It sometimes happened that hostilities took place between the traders and the blacks, but as the crews and vessels of the former were always well armed, they in most cases had the advantage; but then their enemies seldom failed to attack and insult them on their passage back, when, owing to sickness and other causes, they were less able to defend themselves.

Galam and its neighbourhood are the most unhealthy places upon the Senegal; and even the Laptots, inured as they were to an African climate, often became its victims in the course of the voyage. The factors were generally attacked with a delirious fever, which would continue several weeks, if they were fortunate enough to survive its effects so long; and it sometimes happened that the return-cargo was shipped without their being conscious of it, and that they did not recover their senses till they found themselves arrived at Fort Louis. Nor was the voyage homewards without its difficulties. The hold of the vessel, crowded with slaves fettered in pairs, was hot as a furnace; and from it contagious vapours were diffused everywhere: the crew, exhausted by disease and previous fatigue, had scarcely strength to do their duty: and the banks of the river were infested by robbers waiting to plunder the sloop in the event of her being wrecked. The voyage to Galam, whether undertaken on the company's account by their own factors, or by a private trader for his personal advantage, was a perilous expedition, which nothing but necessity or the prospect of large profits ever induced any man to engage in: and yet it appears that the

gains from it did not usually exceed one hundred per cent. — a small return for the hardships and dangers incurred, and for the odiousness of the traffic in which they were encountered.

The other inland voyage to which I have alluded, was for the purpose of carrying on the gum-trade with the Moors of Barbary. Extensive forests of the *Mimosa Nilotica* lie about two hundred miles east of the Senegal; and these people annually resort to them, and collect vast quantities of the gum-arabic, now so generally used in medicine and in the arts. The early establishment of the French upon the Senegal enabled them not only to discover this branch of trade before any other nation had done so, but likewise to appropriate it exclusively to themselves, as they continue to do at the present time. At the termination of the rainy season, a vessel is annually despatched from Fort Louis with the requisite merchandise for the traffic; and the Moors, aware that it will arrive at a certain time at the usual place of rendezvous on the bank of the river, assemble there, bringing along with them upon camels their cargoes of gum-arabic packed in goat-skin bags.

The French traders having reached the spot, which is either Serenpate or Terrier Rouge, each

about sixty miles above Fort Louis, a number of preliminaries and formalities are gone through by both parties. The factors in charge of the vessel invite the principal Moorish merchants on board, and entertain them with coffee, wines, and sweetmeats, and load them with presents for their wives, some of whom have in general the curiosity to accompany their husbands upon these occasions. As the price of the quintal of gum is always fixed and agreed upon before any exchanges take place, the French use every means to conciliate the chief Moors and flatter their vanity, in order to dispose them to be moderate in their demands, and to throw no impediments in the way of trade; for let there be ever so much gum in the market, the holders of it dare not conclude any sales till their superiors have given permission to that effect. The Moors being haughty, capricious, and easily irritated, they must be treated with kindness and deference, and allowed to have their own way in all matters of small importance; and it behoves the factor conducting the gum-trade to avoid offending them, both on account of the interests of the company, and his own personal safety; for they generally make bargains holding naked daggers in their hands, and at these times

sanguinary affrays often take place amongst themselves.

While speaking of the Moors, it may be interesting to mention what has been reported respecting their peculiar mode of trading with a certain people in the neighbourhood of the Senegal; and the more so, because it appears from the statements of Herodotus, that the system in question has existed from time immemorial. He informs us that the Carthaginians carried on commerce with a nation inhabiting a country beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and that it was managed without either of the parties seeing each other, or even exchanging words at a distance; and he describes the manner in which they proceeded, which corresponds very closely with what various modern travellers have reported upon the same subject.

The earliest notice after Herodotus which we have of this singular method of trading, is in the voyage of Cadamosta, a Venetian pilot, to the coast of Africa in 1455. He was informed that the negroes of Melli were annually in the practice of carrying a quantity of salt for traffic to the edge of a great lake of fresh water in the interior of the country. On their arriving there, each merchant placed his parcels of salt

in a line, and put his mark upon it, and then the whole party retired to the distance of half a day's journey, in order to allow the intending purchasers to come to the place, (which they did in boats or canoes,) and examine the salt; for these people always carefully concealed themselves from view, and would never venture to quit their haunts till they felt certain that all strangers had departed. They now placed opposite to each parcel of salt so much gold-dust as they considered to be its equivalent, and then silently and cautiously withdrew. The merchants of Melli returned to the side of the lake in the evening, and if they were satisfied with the price offered for their salt, they took the gold and left the former; but if the sum appeared too small, they left both as they had found them, and again removed to a distance. The invisible traders coming forth a second time, either added more gold to what they had already deposited, or took it away altogether, leaving the salt untouched, as being in their opinion too high-priced.

This system continued several years; but the merchants of Melli at length becoming impatient to have a view of the mysterious traders, employed an artifice to capture some of them.

This they accomplished by digging pits on the side of the lake, and concealing themselves in these till the objects of their curiosity made their appearance, when darting out, they surrounded and seized four individuals, three of whom they immediately set at liberty, but detained the fourth for examination. They addressed him in various languages, but he maintained an obstinate silence, and refused all sort of food, and died in a few days. He was black, tall, and well-proportioned; but his lower lip was immensely thick, and hung down lower than his chin, and it appeared red and inflamed: and it was supposed by the people of Melli, that all his countrymen had a similar deformity, and that they required a continual supply of salt to prevent their lower lips from corrupting; while the hideousness of their appearance made them ashamed to appear before strangers, even for the necessary purpose of trading.

These singular details, so far from being fabulous, are in a great degree confirmed by the authority of more modern and better-informed travellers. Windhus, who accompanied the British Embassy to Morocco in the year 1786, when speaking of the Moors says,—"The method of trading in some of these parts is very

extraordinary, for they do not see the persons they trade with; but passing over a little river, leave their salt at the accustomed place in a pot or jar, and retire; then the people take the salt, and put into the same pot as much gold as they judge it worth, which if the Moors approve of, they take it away; otherwise they set the pot on edge, and retire again, and afterwards find either more gold or their salt returned." Dr. Shaw also observes, that "the Arabs still continue to carry on a trade with some barbarous nations bordering upon the river Niger, without seeing the persons they trade with."

It is worthy of remark that all the authorities above quoted, place the country of the invisible traders in nearly the same geographical position. The expression of Herodotus, "beyond the Pillars of Hercules," is indefinite indeed; but if we suppose with Major Rennel, that Hanno, in his grand expedition, coasted West Africa as far as Sierra Leone, there will be no difficulty in believing that the Carthaginians had commercial relations with the negroes, and that the river up which they are stated to have sailed was the Senegal. And though Dr. Shaw mentions the Niger as being the place of trade, it is evident

that he means the Senegal, which bore the name of Niger among geographers long after its first discovery.

Though, in describing the inland voyages which it fell to the lot of the junior factors to perform, I have chiefly referred to the French trade on the Senegal, the same general features belonged to the navigation of the Gambia by the English. This river was explored with the greatest assiduity, both by the agents of the British African Company, and by private individuals, under the idea that rich gold-mines existed upon its banks; and it subsequently afforded them the means of carrying on the slave-trade with the interior to a considerable extent. Several factors from James' Fort, the principal English settlement in that quarter, and which is situated near the mouth of the Gambia, were generally dispersed at different outposts along the banks of the river, with supplies of merchandise, for the traffic in ivory and gold-dust; and their situation was particularly perilous and disagreeable, alike on account of the unhealthiness of the climate, the plundering propensities of the negro princes, and their total seclusion from European society.

When they had an opportunity of visiting

each other, they almost dreaded to take advantage of it, lest they should find that their comrade was dead, or that some quarrel with the negroes had forced him to abandon his usual place of residence. A factor named Moore, who was appointed to the charge of the post at Joar, was visited by a negro king, who took possession of his house, and made himself master of everything that it contained. When one of the company's agents residing at the place endeavoured to resist these acts of violence, the negro sovereign ordered his prime minister and secretary to hold him down, while he seized the key of the store-room and opened it, and soon became intoxicated by drinking the brandy which he found there. After plundering and insulting an European who lay sick at the factory, and swallowing all the spirituous liquors that he could in any way procure, he returned home, leaving the victims of his rapacity without means of redress or retaliation.

The only places where the European residents of West Africa were assembled in sufficient number to form a society, were the chief forts of the respective companies, where the governors or directors-general had their head-quarters; and even there the circle was small,

and consisted exclusively of men, the factors never bringing their wives to the country, a thing which most likely they were prohibited from doing.

At some stations, the governors kept open table for a certain number of their officers; but this added little to the sociability of the parties, because of the strict subordination which was at all times maintained amongst them, and which alone was capable of preventing those displays of jealousy and bad feeling, which would otherwise have been of hourly occurrence. No individual ever entered the service of any of the African companies, except with the view of rapidly acquiring wealth; and every one was therefore jealous of his neighbour's advancement, and envious of his prosperity, if it impeded his own, as it generally happened to do; for the factors, at least the inferior ones, made more by private trade than by their salaries, and there not being enough of the former to satisfy them all, each tried to secure as much of it as possible to himself. They likewise often entered into branches of commerce that were forbidden by the company, and endeavoured to improve their fortunes by various

indirect means and fraudulent devices, the exposure of which would have cost them their situations.

Unable to conceal their malpractices from each other, a mutual distrust prevailed amongst them, and they were unanimous with respect to one object only, that of conciliating and flattering their governors, on whose favour their preferment entirely depended. At the same time, though the governor's power was absolute in everything that concerned the establishment over which he presided, a regard for his own interest and comfort frequently prevented his inquiring very strictly into the conduct of his officers, lest they should combine against him, and try to ruin him by false accusations. It even appears, that in early times, the governors of forts were sometimes poisoned by their subordinates, either in revenge for their having exposed their delinquencies, or in order that the senior factor might be promoted to the vacant office.

All writers agree, that honour and integrity were nearly unknown amongst the European inhabitants of the coast of Africa. Self-interest formed their sole principle of action, and truth and good faith were sacrificed without

hesitation whenever the smallest advantage was to be gained by doing so. They practised the grossest frauds with impunity, and acknowledged them without shame. Monrad, a French trader, says, that having once expostulated with a Dutch merchant in West Africa upon his iniquitous transactions, and represented to him that both temporal and eternal punishment might be the result of them, he received this answer — "Heaven is high, and Europe is far off." When we consider the character and pretensions of the majority of those persons who used to enter the service of the different African companies, or visit the country as private adventurers, we shall not be astonished at their yielding to the temptations which beset them there, and taking advantage of their removal to a sphere where social and moral restraint were equally unknown, except amongst the negroes.

The European establishments in West Africa were chiefly supported and recruited by men of desperate fortunes, or of low origin and acquirements. The first soon drank themselves to death, while the second often attained situations of power and consequence, in which they could securely give play to those base qualities

and selfish passions which they had previously concealed, or at least kept under restraint, in order that they might not impede their advancement. The Dutch company was at first in the practice of filling up the vacancies that might occur in the lower branches of its service, out of the private soldiers sent from Holland to garrison the forts; and it sometimes happened that men of this description rose to very high and responsible offices; but as most of them were sooner or later guilty of gross misconduct, that plan of promotion was at length discontinued. A tropical climate has always been found to exert an unfavourable influence upon the character of Europeans, even of a superior class, but it brutalizes and infuriates those of naturally low habits; and hence we may easily conceive what that society must have been, which consisted of an assemblage of foreign vagrants settled upon the fiery and fatal shores of West Africa.

Men of this kind, having no resources within themselves, necessarily passed their spare time in dissipation and sensuality. They soon grew tired of each other's society, and found life insipid, unless it was enlivened by noisy conviviality and a free use of the bottle. Even

during the day, the table was usually crowded with glasses and different liquors, and an evening debauch was a matter of course with every one. Bosman remarks, that the favourite beverage with the English upon the coast of Africa was punch. "It is incredible," continues he, "how many are consumed by this damnable liquor, which is not confined to the soldiery, but some of the principal people are so bigoted to it, that I really believe, for all the time that I was upon the coast, that at least one of their agents, and factors innumerable, died yearly."

When several establishments happened to be situated within a short distance of each other, though they might belong to rival nations, their respective residents were in the habit of paying mutual visits, and giving entertainments, at which times an excess of luxury was often displayed, both in the sumptuousness of the repast, and in the variety and excellence of the wines; and repeated indulgence in these convivial pleasures never failed to hurry many of the guests to an early grave. But with Europeans in West Africa, the fear of death almost always operated less strongly than the desire of enjoyment; and their grand object

was to banish those sombre reflections, and that languor of mind and body, which arose from the continued influence of a malignant climate, and which were most easily and speedily dissipated by the stimulus of jovial society and spirituous liquors. "It would appear," says Monrad, above quoted, "that in that country all persons, whether young or old, retain to the last their inclination for juvenile games and sports. One daily observes them walk abroad with flambeaux, play at quoits, laugh, dance, make hunting-parties in the forest, and go in pleasure-boats upon the rivers. It sometimes happens, when the commandant of the fort is dispirited or unable to sleep, that he causes a drum to be beat in the middle of the night before the chamber-door of each of its residents, all of whom get out of bed and assemble in the great hall; and then both blacks and whites mingle together, and dance and drink almost in a state of nudity."

In taking a general view of the history of the foreign establishments that have existed upon the coast of Africa, we shall be astonished to find that the residence of so many Europeans in so many different parts of the country, during upwards of three centuries, has

not had a more powerful and extensive influence upon the character and habits of the negroes. These people would appear to be, of all others in the world, the most likely to adopt the ideas and customs of persons whom they considered superior to themselves, and to receive lessons from those who were qualified to instruct them. Credulous, fond of novelty, easily conciliated, unfettered by ancient traditions or priestly power, or by the trammels of caste, they seem to be waiting for some foreign influence to settle their opinions, and introduce amongst them a system of moral and social conformity. Nevertheless, experience has proved the reverse of this; for the inhabitants of West Africa are still externally and essentially the same people that they were when the Portuguese began to frequent their coasts in the middle of the fifteenth century. They have, indeed, acquired a taste for trinkets and cloths, and other articles of European manufacture, and generally prefer brandy to palm-wine; but they have never attempted to construct houses or vessels after our fashion, or to acquire a knowledge of any of our arts, or of our mode of war, or our system of commerce. Nor have they any greater curiosity respecting our reli-

gion, which they doubtless hold in small esteem, if they judge of it by the conduct of those of its professors with whom they have hitherto had intercourse. It often happened that Europeans of the lower class, after residing a considerable time amongst the negroes, adopted their system of *fetichism;* and there is reason to believe that many even of the factors used to become converts to that absurd and revolting creed, and secretly practise its rites and ceremonials.

It is commonly supposed that the unwillingness of the negroes to adopt our habits and usages, arises from their indolence. This remark is neither satisfactory nor correct; for many of them could enjoy the improvements, and obtain the conveniences of civilized life, without the smallest personal exertion, by employing their slaves and gold to that end. The king of Ashantee could soon assemble foreign mechanics and artisans in his capital, and erect a splendid palace, did he feel inclined to depart from the usages of his ancestors.

The general adherence of the negroes to their own customs is, in my opinion, to be chiefly attributed to the conviction that prevails amongst them that they are a peculiar and distinct race

of beings, and that they have nothing in common with white men, and are unfitted to partake in their interests, avocations, and pleasures. They express this notion by allegorical fables; and believe that their inferiority to Europeans arises from their forefathers having long ago excited the severe displeasure of the Deity by preferring gold to knowledge. These ideas, however, do not render them melancholy, though they undoubtedly tend to repress all desire for improvement, and all ambition to equal foreign nations in intelligence and in the arts of life.

The progeny of Europeans by negro women is, as may be supposed, very common upon the west coast of Africa. In some places there are whole villages of mulattoes. All voyagers agree in representing these people as the vilest and most contemptible of the human species. The men are deformed and of a feeble constitution, and are ignorant, unprincipled, and revengeful, cruel to their slaves, incredibly indolent, and yet full of self-conceit on account of their origin. The women mostly follow a profligate course of life, and are devoted to dress during their earlier years, and afterwards to sloth and drinking. Both sexes profess the Christian religion, though they in reality know nothing of

it; and all those of Portuguese descent call themselves Catholics. The men used to enlist as soldiers at any of the forts where their services might be required; but the greater part of them derived their subsistence from contraband trade, in carrying on which they were the agents of the interlopers of different nations, who at all times unlawfully traded upon the coast, to the prejudice of the various chartered companies who had establishments there.

The chief mulatto settlements on the coast of Africa are Kacheo, at the mouth of the river St. Domingo, and St. Thomé, in the island of the same name, lying under the equator. Kacheo consists of a small town, and a mean fort, much out of repair, and scantily provided in every respect. Nevertheless, the place generally has a governor appointed in Europe, who is, in most instances, some military man whom age or infirmities has rendered unfit for active service, or some troublesome claimant upon the crown whom it is found desirable to get rid of; for few persons of any class that go to Kacheo ever return from it. Twenty or thirty invalided Portuguese soldiers form the garrison; but their pay is so small that they can scarcely subsist upon it, and most of them, when off

duty, are in the habit of prowling about the streets at night, and robbing any one that they may happen to meet. Criminals are often banished from Portugal to Kacheo, and these, with the mulattoes produced by their intercourse with the negro women, compose the chiefest part of its population.

The indolence of all classes is so great, that the land in even the immediate neighbourhood of the town remains uncultivated, with the exception of a few fields of maize and plantains; and the unhealthiness of the climate, doubtless increased by this cause, conjoined with the poverty of the inhabitants, gives them a distressed and emaciated appearance which makes a stranger shudder. Most of the houses are built of upright wooden posts interwoven with twigs, and plastered with clay, and whitewashed; the roofs are thatched with palm-leaves.

The rain sometimes pours down in torrents for weeks together, accompanied with such frightful storms of thunder and lightning, that the inhabitants are forced to shut themselves up in their dwellings, and sit in darkness till the return of tranquil weather. Nor dare they at any time venture far beyond the precincts of the town, lest the Papel negroes (the aborigines

of the country) should rush from the neighbouring woods and destroy or take them prisoners; and assassinations often occur amongst the mulattoes in Kacheo itself, insignificant as it is in population and extent; and when an alarm of the kind is given, the inhabitants, instead of running to assist the person assaulted, close their shutters and bar their doors, lest they should become witnesses of the crime, and afterwards fall victims to the fears and jealousy of its perpetrator. Refugees and desperate characters of every kind resort to the place, and live without decency or restraint, and are kept in check by nothing but the dread of suffering retaliation from the hands of each other. Filth, famine, and misery lurk in every house; crime stalks abroad with brazen forehead; the demon of pestilence patroles the streets; and human life and human character assume, in every particular, their basest forms and their most revolting aspects.

The formation of colonies upon the west coast of Africa, or its islands, has been attempted by several European powers, but always without success. And it must be admitted, that no other part of the world offers so many advantages, in so far as the cultivation of tropi-

cal productions, and the convenience of trade, are concerned. The cotton-tree, the indigo plant, the sugar-cane, and the coffee shrub, and a variety of species of the palm, are indigenous there; besides tobacco, rice, Indian-corn, and millet: and it is probable that nearly all useful vegetables of equatorial growth might be naturalized in the country, not even excepting the nopal, or *cactus coccinifera* of Mexico, and the spices of the Eastern archipelago. The assemblage of all these sources of wealth (without mentioning gold-dust, wax, and ivory,) in the immediate neighbourhood of Europe would prove an object of grand importance to any nation that could accomplish it: but the frightful mortality which has always depopulated European settlements upon the coast of Africa is likely for the future to discourage both governments and private individuals from making permanent establishments there.

Two principal attempts at colonization have been made by the British in West Africa — one at Sierra Leone, under the auspices and protection of Government; and the other by an association of private individuals, who fixed upon the island of Bulama as the theatre of their operations. Bulama lies at the mouth of Rio Grande,

in north lat. 11°, and is a highly fertile and thickly-wooded island, of moderate elevation, and abounding with elephants, and all kinds of game. The expedition for its settlement consisted of two hundred and seventy-five emigrants, who embarked in two ships and a cutter, and reached their place of destination in safety; but, unfortunately, a party of them landed and took up their abode upon the island before it had been purchased of the negro chief to whom it belonged. The consequence was, that a body of his people attacked these intruders by surprise, killing six of them, and carrying away as prisoners four women and two children. This untoward event proved fatal to the progress of the intended colony; for it alarmed the emigrants so much that the greater number of them insisted upon returning to England, for which they shortly afterwards set sail, leaving only eighty persons upon the island, who had agreed to remain there under the command of Lieut. Beaver, of the Navy. This gentleman was one of a committee which had been appointed to superintend the settlement; and though his colleagues in office had deserted him, he resolved to fulfil his duty, and to continue in Bulama as long as a single colonist should abide there.

The exertions which he made, and the difficulties, hardships, and dangers which he encountered, during seventeen months that he kept his post, equal or perhaps exceed anything that ever fell to the lot of any individual similarly situated. The rainy season commenced forthwith — the people fell sick and died in rapid succession; those who retained their health were lazy and discontented; the negroes daily threatened to attack and plunder the colony; the medical attendant refused to do his duty, and eventually quitted the island; and at length Beaver himself was attacked with fever, and lay dangerously ill. Nevertheless he recovered; but the mortality still continued amongst his companions, who sank one by one under the malignity of the climate, their minds feeling its influence as powerfully as their bodies did. "It has been observed," remarks Beaver, "that sickness, fear, and despondency, have had strange effects upon the minds of the colonists; indeed, they are at this moment every one of them almost idiots; their mental faculties seem entirely worn out."

During these periods of gloom, danger, and embarrassment, Lieut. Beaver had contrived to build a block-house, one hundred and sixteen feet square, to clear a large piece of ground, to

make a garden, and dig a well, &c. a large proportion of the labour required in these works being performed by his own hands. At length the population of the colony was reduced to five individuals besides himself; and these persons having resolved to quit the island, notwithstanding his remonstrances against their doing so, he was obliged to accompany them. The party embarked in a cutter, and arrived safely in Sierra Leone, from whence Lieut. Beaver sailed for England. In his "African Memoranda," he endeavours to show that the ill success of the Bulama expedition was entirely owing to the misconduct of the emigrants, and to their having arrived at the place of settlement at an improper season: but few impartial observers will fully admit the correctness of this opinion; and while every one will give Beaver due credit for his courage, firmness, and perseverance, they will regard the history of his colony as a veto against any future agricultural settlements in West Africa, rather than as an evidence of their practicability, or an encouragement to establish new ones.

With respect to the colony at Sierra Leone, which has cost Britain so much money and so many lives, every one knows that it is a com-

plete failure. The emancipated and delivered negroes, for whom it was intended as an asylum, soon grew disgusted with the spot, and retired into the interior of the country. The native merchants, who were expected to have come from Central Africa to trade at the settlement, have never yet made their appearance there. Twenty-two thousand individuals of different descriptions joined the establishment at Sierra Leone between 1787 and 1826, and of these only thirteen thousand remained, or were in existence, at the end of the latter year. The European emigrants consisted almost exclusively of disbanded and pensioned soldiers, who, it must be supposed, were sent to the coast of Africa, not that they might give the negroes a taste for civilized life, or improve their morals, but that they might cease to be a burthen to Government, and a pest to their native country. Of these men fewer have perished than could have been expected, considering their dissipated habits; for out of one thousand two hundred and twenty-two that joined the colony between 1817 and 1819, it appears that nine hundred and forty-nine were alive in 1826. But the number of civil and military officers who have fallen victims to the climate is immense; and

Sierra Leone may now be considered untenable by Europeans, or, at least, not worth retaining. When the public functionaries shall have been withdrawn from it — when it shall no longer enjoy a local government — and when its laws shall cease to be administered or observed — its motley and partially-instructed population, unable to relish the simplicity of negro life, will in all likelihood become pirates and banditti; and the British nation may hereafter find it necessary, for the security of her African trade, to exterminate a colony which she has long protected, and has hitherto fostered with useless and unproductive care.

# SOUTH AFRICA.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN OCEAN.

THOUGH practical navigation has undergone many improvements since the time of Vasco de Gama, nautical men are liable even in the present day to encounter in the South African seas most of the difficulties and obstacles which were described by himself and by his successors as being inevitable in that part of the ocean. The strength and excellent construction of our ships enable us to double the Cape of Good Hope at all seasons without accident or serious detention; and it has therefore become a common idea that the early Portuguese navigators must have exaggerated the dangers of the passage, not only from a love of the marvellous, but also from motives of commercial policy inculcated by their sovereign in his anxiety to deter other nations from attempting to reach India by that route. But the Dutch, resident at the Cape of Good Hope, assert that a con-

siderable amelioration has taken place in the climate there since the time of De Gama, and that it is actually much less tempestuous in the present day than it used to be when they first took possession of the country in 1652. We know various instances of a change of climate having occurred in islands and continents, in consequence of the extirpation of forests, the draining of marshes, and other causes; but we have no authority for supposing that any parts of the great ocean are liable to be affected in a similar way; because the character of their surface never undergoes the least alteration, and because they develope no new physical agents calculated to exert any influence upon their respective atmospheres. There appears, then, to be as little reason to suspect De Gama of exaggeration in his account of the African ocean, as to place much confidence in the reports of the Dutch colonists upon the same subject. The climate of that sea is doubtless precisely the same at present as it was several centuries back; and if modern navigators find much less difficulty in doubling the Cape of Good Hope than their predecessors did, the fact is to be exclusively ascribed to the superiority of the former in nautical tactics, and to the greater

sea-worthiness of their ships. Rogers, and Anson, and others, did not effect the passage round Cape Horn without many dangers and much detention; but latterly the doubling of that celebrated promontory has become of easy accomplishment, not because the neighbouring seas are less tempestuous than they formerly were, but because nautical men choose the proper season for the voyage, and equip their vessels in a suitable way. This is proved by the statements of Weddel, who surveyed New South Shetland in 1820, and who says, "Even at present an attempt to double Cape Horn in the month of March might subject the navigator to all the distresses which Anson experienced in 1747; and a ship must be well found, and in good trim, to effect the passage at all any time between February and April."

The general aspect of the South African ocean is monotonous and unpleasing. It is continually agitated by a long and irregular swell, which suffers little sensible diminution even after the longest calms that ever occur in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope, where the weather is almost always in extremes, being either very boisterous or very serene. Thus the navigator is either involved in a tem-

pest, and fearfully tossed by the violence of the waves, or he is detained by calms, and lies rolling for days together in an undulating sea. The want of general winds likewise proves a great obstacle to his progress, for in the South African ocean it scarcely ever blows from any quarter but the north-west, and south-east, either of which winds will prevent his doubling the Cape, according as he happens to be bound for Europe or for India. The continual turbulence of this sea is necessarily unfavourable to the developement of animal and vegetable life, and it presents but few varieties of either. Here the coral insect rears no monument of its labours —the medusæ are too fragile to exist—the flying-fish would find itself benumbed with cold —and no sooner are the algæ detached from the rocks, than they are torn to pieces by the waves. Several species of oceanic birds, however, sometimes enliven the prospect; amongst which the albatross, the solan goose, the black gull, and the pintado, are most conspicuous. Seals abound in the clusters of rocky islets that lie near the coast, and whales visit the bays in winter, and are then caught in considerable numbers. Nevertheless, few parts of the ocean are more solitary and less serene than the South

African seas, which, though situated in the neighbourhood of the tropics, enjoy little of that tranquillity and productiveness which they might be expected to derive from their proximity to the sun.

As it appears to me that the Cape of Good Hope still merits the appellation bestowed upon it by Diaz, it will be proper to say something of these gales of wind which so often occur there, and which appeared so formidable to that navigator. The most violent of these storms blow from the north-west, and occur in May, June, and July; but, generally speaking, they are not particularly dangerous, because there is no lee-shore to be avoided, and because seamen with common attention may always foretell their approach at least twelve hours before their commencement. In no part of the ocean is the marine barometer so valuable an instrument as in the neighbourhood of South Africa. It invariably begins to fall the day before the setting-in of a north-wester, and does so in a greater or less degree in proportion to the violence of the coming tempest. Should the mercury rise even while the gale continues to increase in strength, moderate weather may confidently be expected within

fifteen or twenty hours afterwards. These gales are almost always accompanied with fogs and rain, and their strength is very regular throughout their duration. They seldom fail to blow themselves out, without any of those deceitful lulls and shiftings which characterise typhoons and hurricanes, and cause a cross sea, more dangerous to a ship than the most furious winds. Any well-equipped vessel can safely heave-to off the Cape, and lie in security, drifting at the rate of one mile and a half an hour.

It is the frequency of these gales in the winter, and their always blowing from the same quarter, not less than their strength, that raises those tremendous waves for which the Cape seas have always been so celebrated. The rapid current which sets through the Mozambique Channel, along the eastern coast of Africa, has also a considerable share in producing them; for, running sometimes at the rate of eighty or a hundred miles a-day, and being checked in its course by an opposing gale, a most tumultuous agitation of the waters is the consequence. It is very difficult to convey an accurate idea of the magnitude and appearance of the Cape waves in a strong gale. When a person looks from the deck of his ship while

it is mounting or descending one of them, he sees a smooth expanse on every side, and looks in vain for any turbulence of the waters immediately round him, the whole space within the range of his eye being no more than the side of a single wave, which he must pass over before he can even get in sight of another. But this description applies only when the weather is very hazy, as it always is during the height of a north-west gale. In clear sunshine, the vision embraces a range of many miles, and the vast ridges of water above described may be observed following each other in silent and majestic regularity, their summits crowned with dazzling wreaths of foam, while the valleys that intervene present a tranquil, smooth, and glassy surface.

Those persons who have never been at sea, generally form very inaccurate notions of the real height of its waves; and this arises chiefly from the vague and exaggerated expressions in common use amongst mariners. It is very certain that the sea never rises "mountains high," nor even attains an elevation equal to that of the lowest hills; and that the greatest waves are less formidable and remarkable from the loftiness of their crests, than on account of the

prodigious and irresistible body of water that composes them. Still, it appears to me, that if the vulgar err on one side of the question, philosophers do the same on the other, when they assert that no wind, however strong, can cause the waves to rise more than six or seven feet above the level of the ocean. They, indeed, qualify this by admitting of compound waves of a much greater height, formed by the collision and accumulation of many natural ones, and produced by the action of opposing winds or currents, or bold shores, and various similar causes. Boyle, in his Observations on the Deepness of the Sea, endeavours to prove that the agitation of its waters in stormy weather does not extend many fathoms below its surface. He speaks, however, altogether upon the authority of others, and the testimony which he brings forward in support of his opinions is rather equivocal. An individual, who was in the habit of descending in a diving-bell, told him that once upon an occasion of the kind, when the waves were seven or eight feet high, he found, after reaching an inconsiderable depth, that the waters around him were perfectly tranquil; and that another time, having been lowered into the sea in calm

weather, and having remained there for a short period, he was drawn up again, and found, to his astonishment, that a storm was raging on the face of the ocean, though he had not till that moment been aware of anything of the kind. He likewise mentions the experience of a ship-master, who used to dive under his vessel (which drew twelve feet of water) while she was under sail. Both stories have an equal degree of probability, and it is likely that the hero of them was one and the same person; for the man that would descend into the ocean in a diving-bell, when its waves were seven or eight feet high, certainly would not hesitate to venture overboard for amusement in stormy weather, to see what was going forward under the keel of his ship.

I am willing to admit, that the height of the waves is often increased by reflected winds, by currents, and by the character of the neighbouring coasts; but if the influence of these and similar causes is essential to the formation of a sea more than six feet high, how does it happen that the waves are found to be the larger the farther we go from land? In the vast and unbroken expanse of ocean, eight hundred or one thousand miles south of the Cape of Good

Hope, the waves must surely be what philosophers term natural, in the strictest sense of the word; yet they rise far above the limits which it assigns to them. Cook, in his second voyage, often mentions the lofty seas which he encountered in these latitudes; and speaking of some ice islands sixty feet high, he says, "Such was the force and height of the waves, that the sea broke quite over them." And in a subsequent part of his narrative, he describes an iceberg one hundred feet in height, over which the waves broke "considerably higher."

Winstanley, who first erected a lighthouse on the Eddystone rock, states that the building, though sixty feet high, was buried in the waves in a violent storm, and that even after he had raised it forty feet more, the spray appeared to fly another hundred feet above the vane. Smeaton, the builder of the present Eddystone lighthouse, which is ninety-five feet high, confirms all this, and declares, that in strong gales from the south-west, the structure is often so entirely enveloped by the waves as to be invisible.

In both of the instances above referred to, allowance must of course be made for the increased elevation of the waves, arising from their sudden and violent collision with the ob-

ject against which they struck. To estimate this at two-thirds of the whole measurement, is granting more than is necessary or even reasonable, and reduces the actual height of the loftiest natural wave to about thirty feet, which approaches very nearly to what personal observation has led me to consider the truth in this matter. An accumulation of the waters of the ocean much exceeding this, may however take place during earthquakes and other convulsions of nature, as has happened several times on the coast of Calabria, and more particularly still at the submersion of Callao, the port of Lima, which occurred in 1745, and destroyed several thousand people. On that occasion, it is said, that a wave at least sixty feet high was seen advancing towards the devoted town, which it almost instantaneously overwhelmed.

In reference to the north-west gales that prevail near the Cape of Storms, it is worthy of remark, that the most frequent and formidable ones come from the same quarter in both hemispheres. It seems natural enough that north-west winds should occur oftener and blow with more violence than any other in the North Atlantic and Pacific, and in the Baltic and Greenland seas, and in various parts of the

ocean similarly situated, because we may suppose that the frozen regions at either pole have a great influence upon the general direction of the winds of each hemisphere. But this does not hold good with respect to the southern one; for in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope, and in much higher southern latitudes, these north-west winds still prevail a considerable part of the year, and are remarkable both for their strength and duration. They cannot have the least connexion with similar winds in the northern hemisphere; for the south-east trade, which always blows between the equator and 25° south latitude, forms a broad and intercepting barrier to anything of the kind. During December, January, and February, south-east winds prevail often with great violence at the Cape of Good Hope; and as they are very cold, people generally suppose that they come from the frozen regions of the south pole. But this is so far from being the case, that navigators who run down to 37° or 38° south, in the months above mentioned, almost invariably fall in with strong north-westers; and Cook's second voyage proves that these continue to be very common even in the vicinity of the Antarctic circle.

On viewing a map of the world, the first

thing that strikes the eye is the vast disproportion of land in the two hemispheres. The continents of Asia and America spread themselves out immensely, as they extend towards the Arctic circle, and the seas in that quarter are circumscribed by vast expanses of territory, and intersected by islands, archipelagoes, and peninsulas. On the contrary, Africa and South America grow rapidly narrower as they approach the tropic of Capricorn, and from thence dwindle into a wedge-like shape; and, as if destitute of solidity, and fearful of encountering the boisterousness of a glacial sea, and the collision of mountains of ice, they terminate in their celebrated promontories, the one 55° and the other 35° short of the pole, leaving a wide and uninterrupted expanse of ocean in its neighbourhood.

These geographical peculiarities of the southern hemisphere, at once suggest the idea of an Antarctic continent; but it has hitherto been sought for in vain, for I will not give the name to the lately discovered country called New South Shetland, which seems to be merely a cluster of islands having an appearance of continuous land, owing to mountains of ice extending between their extremities, and in a manner uniting them together. Neither does that coun-

try lie in the situation which reason and certain natural phenomena would lead us to assign to the supposed Antarctic continent, which Cook supposed must be found (if it does exist at all) either opposite to the southern extremity of Africa, or somewhat farther to the eastward. The limited extent of Africa south of the equator was not the chief ground of his opinion, but the vast accumulation of ice which he observed in comparatively low latitudes in the southern ocean.

It now seems incontestable, that ice cannot be formed in large quantities except in the vicinity of land; and that icebergs are speedily destroyed by the action of the winds and waves when they float into the open sea. Nevertheless, the region of ice islands extends at least twelve degrees farther from the pole in the southern than in the northern hemisphere; and some years ago a ship encountered several of these at so low a latitude as 42°, or within seven degrees of the Cape of Good Hope. We must still, therefore, believe in the existence of an Antarctic continent, though Cook failed in making the discovery, and doubted if any man ever would accomplish it. But the apparent want of equilibrium in the northern and southern hemispheres, above alluded to, does not amount to the extent hitherto sup-

posed, for it has been ascertained that the vibration of the pendulum in any given latitude at sea in the latter, is greater than it is in a corresponding one in the former; and this observation proves, that the average depth of the ocean in the southern division of the globe falls short of what it is in the northern one.

There is something inexpressibly sublime in the character of the southern lands hitherto discovered. It is true, that they present much the same features as the Arctic regions; but their relative position is dissimilar to that of the latter, in so far as they are totally separated from the rest of the world by a turbulent ocean of vast and uninterrupted extent. Greenland and Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla belong either to America or to Asia, and are in the neighbourhood of civilized Europe, and are bounded by seas where ships annually resort for commerce and fishing. But Sandwich Land, the *Ultima Thule Australis*, has, as far as we know, been only once seen by human beings, through a veil of drifting snow and through vistas of icebergs, and probably will never again be visited; and it is nearly the same with the great island of South Georgia, which stands isolated and desert in the midst of a raging ocean.

These countries produce nothing in summer but coarse grass, and no animals of any description are to be found upon them; and their black mountainous cliffs, whitened by surf, either entirely forbid the approach of ships, or are scooped into sullen and gloomy bays of small extent, where there is a fathomless depth of silent water, and where the sun's rays can seldom penetrate, on account of the loftiness of the arched precipices which inclose them.

Whether Bartholomew Diaz was the first navigator who doubled the Cape of Good Hope, is a question which has been the subject of many learned dissertations, and which is still undecided. In the opinion of some, the Phenicians, and of others, the Carthaginians, had circumnavigated Africa many centuries before the era of the Portuguese discovery of a new route to India; and it is insisted that notices of such voyages are to be found in the works of various ancient historians. Strabo seems to be of opinion that Homer himself had some knowledge of an expedition of the kind, for he makes Menelaus, in the Odyssey, tell Telemachus, that he had sailed into the country of the Ethiopians. But as Menelaus could not have entered the Red Sea from the Mediterranean, or navigated

the Nile higher than its first cataracts, the only way of explaining how he visited Ethiopia appears to Strabo to be in supposing that he had passed through the Pillars of Hercules, and circumnavigated Africa, and reached the former country by way of the Erythrean Sea; or that the Isthmus of Suez was at that time covered with water, and that Menelaus sailed over it. But it strikes me that the whole difficulty is solved by a passage in Diodorus Siculus, which indicates that the country called Ethiopia in the time of Homer extended farther to the westward than it was subsequently considered to do. Diodorus says, that a vessel with a favourable wind may sail from the Palus Mæotides to Rhodes in ten days, and from thence to Alexandria in four days, and *up the Nile into Ethiopia* in ten days more. This proves that it was possible to go by water from the Mediterranean into Ethiopia, and that the latter name was formerly given to those regions of Egypt which border upon the first cataracts of the Nile.

It has been justly remarked by various writers, that had any one circumnavigated Africa in early times, and returned to tell his tale, we should find some distinct and exact notice of so important an event in the works of the

ancient historians. To this it may be added, that had such a voyage been made, the ancients would have possessed some knowledge of the constellations of the southern hemisphere. But as nothing of the kind appears in their writings, it seems tolerably certain that the Portuguese, who explored the western coast of Africa in the time of Prince Henry, were the first Europeans that ever crossed the equator. As neither the Phenician nor Carthaginian mariners were acquainted with the compass, they would find it requisite to observe the stars assiduously while at sea; and had they ever sailed beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, and reached even the tropic of Cancer, the new appearance presented by the heavens must have strongly excited their attention, and been regarded as the most important and interesting record of their voyage. It is to be regretted that the journals of Diaz and De Gama have not been preserved, for their account of the impressions caused in their minds by the successive appearance of the various constellations of the southern hemisphere, must have been not the least curious part of them. When they had passed the equator, and found that the polar star was no longer visible, they

would feel as if the chain connecting them with the northern world was broken; and as they continued to advance to the southward, the closing of each day would be a time of intense interest, and they would anxiously watch the stars coming forth, impatient to ascertain whether the heavens were about to present any new wonders.

The constellation of the Cross is particularly striking, both from its form and its splendour. The first notice which we have of it is to be found in the abstract of a voyage of a Portuguese pilot to the Island of St. Thomas in 1520. The passage referred to runs thus:— "When he arrived at the Rio de Ouro, which is under the tropic of Cancer, he saw with astonishment four new stars, remarkable for their size and brilliancy, and which, says he, are disposed in the form of a cross." Since that time, various travellers of much greater celebrity have related the impressions which they received from the first view of the constellations of the south, and particularly Humboldt, who often alludes to the subject with enthusiasm. "The traveller," says he, "feels that he is not in Europe when he sees the immense constellation of the Ship, or the phosphorescent clouds

of Magellan, arise in the horizon. The heavens and the earth, everything in the equinoctial regions assumes an exotic character. We saw distinctly for the first time the Cross of the south, on the nights of the 4th and 5th of July, in latitude 16° north. It was strongly inclined, and appeared from time to time between the clouds, the centre of which, furrowed by uncondensed lightnings, reflected a silvery brightness. If a traveller may be permitted to speak of his personal emotions, I shall add, that on that night I saw one of the reveries of my earliest youth accomplished." Spix and Von Martius, known from their scientific travels in Brazil, also speak with animation of the skies of the southern hemisphere; and even Thunberg, who is seldom betrayed into expressions of emotion or admiration upon any subject, becomes enlivened here, and regrets his small acquaintance with astronomy. "I was extremely sorry," says he, in his Travels in South Africa, "that I had not taken more pains to learn so noble a science, and would with pleasure have exchanged for the knowledge of a single constellation all those (botanical) definitions with which I had formerly burdened my memory."

The meteorology of the South African ocean presents few peculiarities. Hurricanes and waterspouts are scarcely known there, and thunder-storms and other electrical phenomena occur very seldom. At sea, between the tropic of Capricorn and the Cape of Good Hope, on both sides of the continent, the transparency of the atmosphere exceeds what is known in any other part of the world; and European astronomers, on first visiting these latitudes, contemplate with astonishment the nocturnal splendour of the heavens, in which the naked eye can perceive stars of two degrees less magnitude than it can discern in the northern skies. Here Jupiter and Venus shine with startling refulgence, and cause opaque bodies to cast well-defined shadows; the fixed star Aldebaran appears nearly as ruddy as Mars; Castor and Pollux seem to reflect each other's light; the Corona Australis, dim and obscure in other latitudes, displays the lustre of its gems; and Orion appears preternaturally brilliant and gigantic. During the monotony of a voyage, a sky of this kind affords countless resources to the instructed and speculative mind; and nowhere can it be contemplated under such favourable circumstances as at sea,

where a regular horizon, and the absence of all intervening objects, allow the eye to range unwearied over the whole sweep of the heavens, and enjoy their concentrated splendour at one and the same moment.

# GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF SOUTH AFRICA.

FEW headlands in the world present a character so striking and defined as the Cape of Good Hope. Its boldness and majesty conform well with the vast magnitude of the continent of which it forms the southern extremity. The lion is properly the emblem of Africa, because the noblest species of that animal is peculiarly found there; and it is singular that Nature should have carved one of the three mountains composing the Cape promontory into a corresponding shape. The likeness in question is not at all fanciful or forced, but nearly as accurate and regular, in certain respects, as would have been produced had human labour been employed upon an equally large scale. The Lion's Hill displays a colossal statue of the animal in a couchant posture, the crown of the head being

two thousand five hundred feet high, and the hind-quarters about sixteen hundred; while a tongue of land, extending from the inferior part of these, forms the tail of the gigantic monster. Had the artist who proposed to fashion a statue of Alexander the Great out of Mount Athos, been allowed to execute his plan, it is doubtful if the resemblance to the original would have been more perfect than it is in the natural animal colossus of South Africa.

Neither Diaz, nor Vasco de Gama, nor Cabral, nor many of their successors, could have seen Lion's Hill, or at least been aware of its peculiar contour, which is not discoverable from sea until a ship has entered Table Bay; and though it is uncertain where the Portuguese first landed, we may believe that it was not in a port whose unsheltered expanse would be highly uninviting to mariners who had so much cause, both from hearsay and experience, to dread the tempests for which the South African seas were at that time so celebrated. Saldanha Bay was more likely the first resort of the early voyagers; for in most of the old charts of South Africa it is called Table Bay, from whence we may suppose that it was frequented under that name, till Van Rebeck landed in Table Bay in 1650, and discovered and pointed out its general superio-

rity over the other ports of South Africa. It would seem surprising, that a country so favourably and conveniently situated as the Cape of Good Hope should have remained uncolonized and almost unvisited till more than one hundred and fifty years after its discovery, were not an explanation of the fact to be found in the scarcity and badness of its harbours. Between the mouth of the Orange River on the west side of the continent, and that of the Kitkamma on the east one, an extent of coast amounting to fourteen hundred miles, and embracing the whole colony, there is not one tolerable harbour, with the exception of Saldanha Bay, which is almost useless on account of the scarcity of wood and water in its neighbourhood. The other places frequented by shipping in the present day are no better than coves and open bays, in which vessels at best are sheltered from only one wind, and are daily liable to be driven on shore and disabled or lost. It is not astonishing then, that the earlier navigators sailing to and from India should have touched as seldom as possible upon a coast where violent tempests are as common as secure harbours are rare, and where there were neither spices nor precious metals to repay the dangers of the navigation.

The general aspect of the Cape of Good

Hope, as viewed from the sea, is not inviting; and it is the previous long voyage alone that disposes the stranger coming in sight of it to find something beautiful in its scenery, and to anticipate any local enjoyment during a residence in the country. The mountains are stern, rugged, and for the most part destitute of wood; the shores present little cultivation, and few appearances of being inhabited; and the grass is scanty, and confined to the low grounds; and a strong surf generally breaks along the rock-bound coasts. But nevertheless a tranquil grandeur, and a character of magnitude and consistency pervade the whole; and if the landscape wants that variety, and those rich tints, which belong to the exterior of many countries situated in a less happy climate, it at least offers nothing repulsive or unharmonious.

The favourable position of South Africa as regards latitude, and the variety of surface which its territory presents, ought to render it one of the most fertile, convenient, and highly-gifted regions in the world; but as the traveller advances into its interior, he seeks in vain for these characters; and, astonished and bewildered by the desolation that surrounds him, he tries to discover the cause of Nature's unkindness to

so vast a country, and asks himself whether it can have always been in the state in which he sees it. Ranges of mountains denuded of soil, and traversed by deep furrows — their summits carved into fantastic shapes by the action of the elements, and their declivities scooped out into vast basins and other cavities — intervening plains overspread with the *detritus* of sandstone formations, and with masses of the same kind of rock, and producing only scattered tufts of coarse grass or acrid plants — wide channels of torrents, and deep beds of rivers perfectly dry, or affording brackish water in little pools far apart — are the grand and leading features of an immense proportion of the territory of South Africa. But this scene of barrenness and desolation, which ought to belong to the Antarctic regions, enjoys an indulgent and temperate climate, and bears no mark of ever having experienced the shock of earthquakes, or the desolating fire of volcanoes, or the fury of the hurricane; and in no part of the world, perhaps, is there so strong a contrast between the sky and the region lying beneath it — the one being genial, mild, and brilliant; the other wild, treeless, and fearfully desert.

South Africa seems to be a worn-out and

emaciated country. Its mountains without soil or verdure resemble skeletons, and its unwatered plains, incapable of supplying the nourishment necessary for the process of vegetation, are like an animal body in which the circulation has ceased from disease or exhaustion. Here we find none of the rotund forms of youthful nature, but wrinkles and decrepitude, and prostration of strength. The plains of South Africa being overwhelmed by the *débris* of its own mountains, may we not suppose that, before this took place, they were as fertile and populous as they are now barren and desert; and that the country has produced within itself the causes of its own destruction, as is the case with Egypt, where the fertile borders of the Nile are continually narrowing from the encroachment of the sands of the neighbouring deserts? and this change was in operation three thousand years ago; for when the priests of Memphis, in their mythological allegories, represented Typhon as endeavouring to enter the bed of Isis, they meant no more than that the sands of Libya were gradually drifting towards the banks of the Nile, and had a tendency to overspread them and destroy their fertility, as has since been partly verified.

It is somewhat remarkable that the countries lying in the same parallel of latitude as South Africa, both to the eastward and westward, should bear a strong resemblance to her in their physical defects. Nearly the whole south-west coast of New Holland is a barren sandy desert, uninhabitable on account of want of water: and directing our view to South America, we find in the vast arid and desert plains called Pampas, bordering on the Rio de la Plata, a repetition of the same repulsive characters. It is true, that both of these regions being very flat and scantily wooded, the scarcity of water under which they suffer is much less difficult to account for than in South Africa, which is everywhere intersected by ranges of hills and mountains of considerable elevation, and in many districts refreshed by abundant and periodical rains. Barrow's explanation of this anomaly seems more satisfactory than any other that has yet been offered. He says, that nearly all the elevated lands of South Africa consist of sandstone resting upon a basis of granite, which latter sometimes rises above the general surface of the country, but is more commonly sunk many feet below it. In the first case, abundant springs are always found, because the

rain, after filtering through the porous sandstone, is stopped in its progress downwards by the dense and impenetrable granite, and is forced to find egress horizontally, which it does in the form of springs and rivulets; but when the upper surface of the stratum of granite lies below the level of the neighbouring country, the water descends in the same way till it meets it, and then runs off under-ground, unseen by man, and useless to the superincumbent soil. The correctness of this theory would soon be brought to the test, were the farmers in the interior of South Africa in the habit of digging wells, as these would enable us to ascertain whether water was always to be found by boring down to the surface of the granite.

The grand characteristic of South Africa being a scarcity of water, it is easy to suppose that the general appearance of the country must almost everywhere indicate the existence of that evil to the most superficial observer. But still there are many considerable tracts of land which form an exception to this, and which vie in beauty with the most fertile spots in Europe. In general, the territory which a stranger first has an opportunity of viewing, is a small district called Wynberg, in the neighbourhood

of Cape Town, which is calculated to give an equally favourable and false idea of the interior of the colony to those who yield too readily to first impressions. Wynberg is covered with country-houses, gardens, vineyards, pasture and cornfields, and woodlands; and is abundantly watered by never-failing springs and rivulets descending from Table Mountain. Here may be found congregated a vast variety of plants and trees indigenous to opposite climates, but accommodating themselves in a wonderful manner to the soil of South Africa. The avenues and pleasure-grounds, and even the public roads, are in many places adorned with oaks not inferior in magnitude and beauty to the finest in Europe, and producing acorns of an extraordinary size and excellence. The same species of fir that is found in the mountains of Norway, may be seen growing in clumps of vast height, and towering above all the neighbouring woods. In the lower and more sheltered garden-grounds, the banana, emblem of the torrid zone, evolves its long and gracefully depending leaves under the shade of orchards of peach and nectarine trees. Not far off, the vines of France and Italy dazzle the eye with the brightness of their green, which contrasts agreeably with the

silvery grey foliage of the *protea argentea*, plantations of which are found interspersed in all directions. In exploring the gardens, one meets with the tea-tree of China, the date of Arabia, and the loquat of Northern India. The orange, fig, and mulberry, grow everywhere, and yield abundance of fruit; and the apple, and pear, and plum, and other orchard trees of Europe, are not less common and productive. Nowhere perhaps does vegetation appear under so great a variety of forms as in the territory of Wynberg; for there the Hindoo, the Eastern Islander, the South European, and the Norwegian, may each find some of the productions of their respective countries, and be reminded of the rural scenes and enjoyments of their native land.

When it is considered that nothing deserving the name of fruit is indigenous to South Africa, it will appear the more singular that so many different sorts, brought from so many different countries, should not only thrive, but attain perfection there. All the trees above enumerated have been imported by the Dutch, who, on taking possession of the Cape, found that it produced no plant or vegetable worthy of cultivation, or of any use to civilized man, unless the aloe and mimosa should be considered an

exception. Many of the European fruits have been improved by transplantation, particularly peaches, nectarines, melons, and mulberries; and if the wine made from the Cape grapes is indifferent, the fault lies with the manufacturer, and not in the material. The above remark is also applicable to the garden vegetables that have at different times been naturalized in the colony. All of them are cultivated with the greatest success; and the potatoes, pease, cabbages, cauliflowers, &c. raised there, are by no means inferior to those of the temperate regions of Europe. Some go so far as to assert, that even the protea argentea, which is so useful as firewood, is not a native of South Africa, but was brought from St. Helena: though I cannot accede to this; for the tree in question is now found growing at a great elevation on the declivities of the Devil's Mountain, where it is impossible to believe that it ever was planted by the hand of man. With respect to the oak and fir, no one thinks of disputing their European origin; and though these and other timber trees flourish at the Cape, still its soil and climate seem more peculiarly favourable for the production of fruit. After travelling a whole day through barren and sandy deserts in the in-

terior of the colony, I have been astonished and delighted on reaching a boor's house, to find beside it a peach orchard covered with blossoms, and exhaling odour, and actually presenting the only vegetable form within the range of the eye.

Wynberg, however, owes much of its beauty and high cultivation to its having been the spot out of the limits of Cape Town first planted and improved by the Dutch. Vander Stel, one of the earlier governors of the colony, chose Constantia, now celebrated for its wines, for a country residence, which no doubt induced many of the wealthier settlers to build houses in the neighbourhood, and adorn them with gardens and vineyards. Other parts of the country, not very distant, make a near approach in agreeableness to Wynberg, particularly Drakenstein and the Paarl; but being farther inland, they have not enjoyed the same advantages as the latter in obtaining foreign plants, and neither have those which they do possess yet had time to become much diffused or to attain great perfection.

The extreme part of the peninsula of South Africa is separated from the rest of the country by a chain of mountains, which extends com-

pletely across the continent in a semicircular direction, forming an impenetrable barrier, except in those places where deep chasms called kloofs, improved by human labour, admit of the passage of travellers, cattle, and waggons. None of the Dutch ventured to settle beyond these mountains for a considerable time after they had colonized the Cape; but population increasing, and land becoming scarce, the emigrants at length found it necessary to extend themselves into the back country. But before this took place, the peninsular tract of land which Nature has walled off in the manner above described, was tolerably well peopled and cultivated, and it is now, and always has been, the most civilized and agreeable part of the colony. It appears that several of the first Dutch governors were of opinion that the settlement should be confined to the territory in question; for their judgment was sound enough to enable them to perceive that the Cape of Good Hope would never be of any value to Holland, or to any other nation, except as a place of refreshment for ships engaged in the India or China trade, as has since been fully verified. And it would be well for Great Britain were the colony concentrated upon the extremity of

South Africa, instead of being scattered over many thousand square miles, as it is at present. In the former case, indeed, the population would necessarily be very small, from the narrowness of the territory assigned to it. But of what use to the parent country is a large population in South Africa? On the contrary, it is injurious; because it entails upon her the inconvenience and expense of supporting a great military, civil, and judicial establishment, which the trade of the colony is too inconsiderable and unimportant to repay. The southern angle of Africa, which nature has so completely separated from the interior country, would, if properly settled and cultivated, produce sufficient supplies of every description for all the Indian shipping of Europe, and would be cheaply and easily defended, and would require but a small civil establishment for its internal government. Had the colony been thus limited from the first, the Hottentots, undisturbed by the encroachment of Europeans, would have remained stationary in the back country, and reared cattle in security, and sold them at a low rate for the consumption of the settlement.

The territory in question is still the most populous and best cultivated part of the colony,

though it presents in different quarters a considerable extent of arid sandy plains. The farms are generally not far distant from each other; their owners are mostly in good circumstances; their houses are neat and substantially built, and they enjoy many of the best comforts and conveniences of life. The country is interspersed with villages more or less considerable, and the roads between them are good. A tract of land, called Hottentots' Holland, on account of its levelness and resemblance to the flats of the United Provinces, and lying at the foot of the range of mountains already alluded to, is very densely peopled, and offers an agreeable picture of cultivation and social order, unmixed with almost any features of African wildness and sterility. The settlements of the Paarl, Stellenbosch, Drakenstein, and Franchhoek, have a similar character; and the European stranger visiting them sees nothing that particularly reminds him that he is in a foreign country, except the total absence of natural woodland.

It is not till he travels some distance into the interior, that he finds himself in the heart of African scenery. In doing this, he must pass one of the three kloofs or openings in the mountains; and as these kinds of defiles are met with

everywhere throughout the country, it will be proper to say something of them here. In general they are formed partly by nature and partly by art; for when it happens that a range of hills interposes itself between two inhabited districts, rendering communication difficult or impossible, the residents find out the spot where the land is least elevated, or where it is divided by a valley, and mutually set about making a road fit for the passage of horses and cattle, and the rude and strong-wheeled vehicles of the country. Kloofs are more or less steep and difficult of ascent, according to the populousness and intercourse of the neighbouring regions. Those situated in old settlements are often tolerably smooth, safe, and convenient; while others, far in the interior, are in many instances so rugged and dangerous as to risk the destruction of the traveller's waggons, and the laming or even death of some of his oxen.

The two kloofs, called the Witzenberg and Scarfedeberg, are the worst in the colony. They are produced by a double range of mountains, separated by a valley about a mile and a half wide; and it requires eight hours to pass them in a bullock-waggon, though the whole distance does not exceed nine miles. It is usual

for travellers going this road to hire a team of oxen to carry them across the two kloofs, while their own cattle, being unyoked, follow the waggon at their ease, and are relieved from a day of fatigue which would unfit them for work for a week after. The sum commonly paid on such occasions is from three to four guineas — in appearance a large amount for a piece of labour of the kind, but in reality not very considerable; for cattle in ascending the Witzenberg often fall down and break their legs, or roll over the precipice and are killed; and the value of a good ox in that part of the country is never less than two pounds sterling.

In the kloof to which the reader's attention is now directed, and which I myself have traversed, the road winds along the side of a steep hill, which, though the lowest of the range to which it belongs, is still about one thousand feet high. The path never exceeds three yards in width, and is so completely covered with large stones, that it seems as if the workmen employed in its formation had endeavoured to obstruct it and render it impassable, instead of toiling to do the reverse. On the right hand the hill rises as perpendicularly as a wall; and on the left, it slopes very abruptly down to the

plain below; and so confined is the intervening road, that a waggon as it winds along is either grazing the cliff on the one side, or trembling on the brink of the precipice on the other. In many places large masses of stone project into the road like buttresses, narrowing it so much that there is scarcely room for a waggon to pass; and the slightest restiveness of the oxen, or inattention on the part of the driver, would be followed by some fatal or irreparable accident. The wearied animals proceed at a slow and regular pace, except where any particular impediment to the progress of the waggon occurs, and then the driver finds it necessary to urge them to exertion both by his voice and his whip. The fore oxen often stumble, and even fall upon their faces; and the panting and frequent bellowing of the whole team show how severe their toil is, and make it requisite that they should be allowed to stop and enjoy a little breathing-time every two or three hundred feet of the way.

The first thing that strikes the stranger on entering the interior of South Africa, is the scantiness of its population, and the remoteness of the farms from each other. In the district of Swellendam, which is one of the best

settled and most cultivated divisions of the colony, the houses are on an average eight or ten miles apart, and the intervening country is generally a desert, partially covered with low shrubs and coarse grass, and unenlivened by any other objects, except perhaps a herd of sheep or oxen. Even these, however, are seldom seen in the neighbourhood of a public road; because the pastures there being mostly eaten up by the cattle of travellers, the resident boors send their flocks to more distant and retired spots. Trees or brushwood are extremely rare on the plains, and still more so on the hills; the lowest ranges of which present those barren, naked, and weather-beaten summits, which in most other countries we are accustomed to find only in mountains of considerable elevation. Nor is game by any means plentiful, even in districts more thinly settled than has been described; for the extreme openness of the country enables animals of every kind to see a great distance around them, and they are shy and timid in proportion, and always make off as soon as they observe any one approaching. The number of travellers, it may be supposed, is very small in the remoter parts of the colony; and one

may journey for days together without meeting a single individual, except at the farm-houses which occur on the way. The above is doubtless a gloomy picture, but nevertheless scenes of the kind have their attractions; and if Nature in the interior of South Africa seldom appears in rich and varied attire, she is always simple, serene, and sublime.

The traveller may proceed several hundred miles and never once perceive any material or even describable alteration in the aspect of the country. Sometimes he will descend the sides of a valley of moderate depth, and sometimes climb a deep kloof or defile; and one day a range of hills will closely skirt the road, and the next they will be at a considerable distance from it; but he will never have occasion to plunge into a forest, or go along the borders of a lake, or pass through cultivated fields, or enter a village, or, in short, experience any of that "sweet vicissitude and grateful change" which lend such charms and animation to a journey through wild and solitary regions more fertile and highly favoured than South Africa. He will often cross the dry bed of a torrent, and have reason to regret that it contains no water; and when a running stream

lies in his route, he will see it afar off, and be able to trace its course by the band of thick shrubbery extending along both its banks. And he will feel the more delight on reaching one of those oases of verdure and vegetation, from their being of so rare occurrence in the arid wastes of Africa. There, in the vicinity of a never-failing stream, or on the banks of a river, Nature assumes some of her most agreeable aspects. Groves of acacia and mimosa, and clumps of odorous and flowering shrubs, form places of shelter for birds and insects. The sound of the rippling waters drops blandly upon the ear, in place of the unvarying and husky sweep of the wind over a country presenting nothing to impede its progress. The rays of the setting sun are softly broken by the stems and the foliage of interposing trees, instead of shooting along the sandy surface in broad defined bands of light; and the winnowing noise of flights of birds returning to their nests, breathes a language of security and composure. The scenery of the interior parts of South Africa has so great a general similarity, that a single description will suffice to convey an idea of the usual aspect of nature there, in districts which are neither

thickly inhabited, nor in a state of cultivation. The following picture is one out of many closely resembling it, which I had an opportunity of contemplating in the course of my travels through the colony.

From the bottom of a kloof which I had ascended, a plain fifteen miles wide, and more than thirty long, stretched to the westward. Its surface was completely covered with ferny shrubs growing close together and to an equal height, and undulating simultaneously when a breeze passed over them. Their continuousness however was broken, and to a long extent, in two directions, though from very different causes. The course of the road, or rather waggon-track, leading to the kloof, could be perceived winding through the bushes for a great way, the reddish hue of the denuded soil rendering it very conspicuous; and following an opposite direction, and intersecting the path, ran a small rivulet, deep and narrow in its channel. Its waters glittering under the setting sun enabled the eye to pursue their course for many miles, and the whole resembled a golden serpent creeping through a low and dense thicket. The plain was bounded on each side by a range of hills, rising somewhat abruptly, and covered two-thirds of

their height with shrubs of the same species as those found below. Near their summits vegetation entirely disappeared; and the surface was bristled with sharp and angular fragments of rock, projecting separately from the ground, or appearing like the edges of narrow strata, and sometimes like basaltic columns. On the tops of some of the hills, large fragments of rock were piled upon each other in the most fantastic and unaccountable manner, and others of a slender form stood perpendicularly amongst them like isolated pillars. The valley was terminated in the west by three successive ranges of mountains, whose numerous summits, presenting many varieties of outline, received the full blaze of the setting sun, and though the most distant, were in reality the most conspicuous and attractive features of the landscape. The whole of this extensive scene was a solitude. No animal of any kind could be observed wandering upon the plain; scarcely was the hum of an insect heard, nor did even the smallest birds appear amongst the shrubs; and the rivulet rippled along untasted and unenjoyed, though in a country where water is one of the scarcest and most valuable gifts of nature.

The banks of South African rivers are in

general remarkable for steepness and slipperiness, and sometimes, as in the Great Fish River, for a rocky precipitousness which renders them impassable except at particular places. The descent and fordage for waggons is often very dangerous in the rainy season, and requires great caution lest the oxen should be carried down by the current and the vehicle upset in the middle of the stream, or lest, after having crossed it, they should be unable to climb the bank and be drawn backwards by the weight behind them. In all cases where there is any risk of accidents of this kind, it is necessary to make the person whose business it is to lead the cattle, swim the river in front of them, holding in his hands a thong attached to the horns of the fore oxen, in order that they may be encouraged to struggle against the current. This deepness of channel is always a source of great inconvenience when the traveller pursues an unfrequented route, as he may require to explore the banks of a river for several miles before he can succeed in discovering a place where his cattle can descend to drink.

Nearly all the rivulets and mountain-torrents in South Africa cease to flow from December or January till May, and several of the most con-

siderable rivers are without current during that season, or offer only scattered pools of water. At the first view of these deep and dry channels, one is led to suppose that the course of the stream which formed them has been changed by some convulsion of nature; so disproportioned is the quantity of water (should there be any at all,) to the magnitude of the chasm within which it is collected. But in July and August, these apparently deserted channels overflow with prodigious torrents, which sweep everything before them, and annually scoop out new and extensive sinuosities in the banks which but partially confine them.

The general scarcity of water throughout South Africa gives a peculiar feature to travelling in that country. In all the northern parts of the world, water is a thing which we expect to find everywhere or anywhere, and there the mere idea of a deficiency of it never enters the mind. But in South Africa the subject is constantly forced upon the attention, and the traveller must regulate all his movements with reference to the situation and distribution of springs and rivulets — halting when he meets with one, though it might otherwise be inconvenient to do so, or conti-

nuing to advance, however fatigued he may feel, till he reaches a fit place of refreshment for his cattle. The water obtained from ponds and rivulets is often so bad that nothing but necessity could induce any one to drink it. Besides being commonly deep-coloured and muddy, it most likely has a brackish or silicious taste, or is strongly impregnated with muriate of magnesia, and intolerably bitter, as I found to be the case in the water of the Lion's River near Beaufort. Salt lakes and springs occur in many places; and I have met with a few large pools so strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen, that their odour was perceptible two miles off. It is very certain that in many parts of the interior of the country the springs and rivulets are drying up, and the annual rains becoming more scanty and irregular. The traveller often meets with houses and farms that have been deserted by their owners on account of a permanent failure in the supply of water which they once enjoyed; and other places are tenable only two-thirds or half of the year for a similar reason. In 1818, when it was found necessary to establish a new drosdy upon the northern frontier of the colony, government selected with that view the present site of Beaufort, as being

a fertile, well-watered, and eligible spot, and purchased the land of a boor for fourteen thousand rixdollars. It was at that time so celebrated for its luxuriant pastures as to have received a Dutch name designating these; but when I visited the place in the spring of 1830, I found the neighbourhood so dry and barren that the cattle were dying for want of food; and the inhabitants assured me that they had enjoyed no regular rains for six years, and pointed out the unmoistened channel of the Gamka River in corroboration of their statements. In the district of Albany, where British settlers are chiefly located, an increasing drought has of late been experienced, and many of them anticipate a period when they will be obliged to abandon their farms on that account, and seek new lands in some more favoured situation.

The rarity of flowing waters in South Africa during the summer season, renders those that do exist places of resort for all kinds of wild animals; though I much question the frequent occurrence of terrible and obstinate combats between beasts of prey in such situations, as has been asserted by several writers. I am rather inclined to believe that animals of the same species always go to one particular spot

when they wish to drink, and in considerable numbers at a time, and that others of a different class then neither molest them nor intrude upon them; and that the banks of rivers in Africa are regarded as neutral ground by the quadrupeds frequenting them, instead of being a daily arena of battle. The vast flocks of deer which roam over the plains of Africa are believed to drink only once in twenty-four hours, and at a certain hour of the day. I have seen thousands of spring-boks proceeding in a file to the Great Fish River for that purpose; and the neighbouring colonists told me that these animals were daily observed passing along at the same time and place, and nearly in the same order.

If the rivers of South Africa are the means of assembling together a great variety of the animal species, the same thing sometimes takes place with respect to the human race. It is scarcely necessary to premise that none of the rivers in the interior of the country have either ferries or bridges, and that when they are flooded and unfordable, those persons intending to cross them must wait till the waters subside. In this way, in the more populous parts of the colony, a large assemblage of people often occurs on their banks; for the different tra-

vellers, as they successively arrive, establish themselves in the neighbourhood of the ford, and a kind of village is very soon formed, a good deal in the Tartar style. Those who come to the place in waggons cause them to be drawn up at a convenient distance apart, and immediately unyoke the oxen, and allow them to feed in the neighbourhood under the care of slaves or Hottentots. Having made these arrangements, the boors draw forth their pipes, and sit smoking and looking around them. Their wives kindle a fire, and set about preparing the meal that happens to be required, and the children scramble inside the waggons, or amuse themselves with the dogs, which are always very numerous on occasions of the kind. Those who arrive on horseback, knee-halter their animals to prevent their straying far, and then proceed to make arrangements for their own accommodation, &c. by depositing their baggage in a spot sheltered by trees or bushes. But if this cannot be obtained, they collect a quantity of brushwood, and pile it up to windward in a semicircular form; and kindling a fire inside, they are soon as comfortably situated as the waggon travellers, particularly if the weather happens to be mild and serene. The slaves

and Hottentots who may join the caravan are contented with still humbler accommodations. They wander from one fire to another as long as the different parties permit their approach, and at night wrap themselves in their sheep-skins, and lay down upon the bare ground. At day-break almost every one hastens to the bank of the river to ascertain its depth; and should it have become fordable, an immediate and general move takes place, and in an hour or two its banks resume their usual solitariness.

Even to name all the animals of South Africa, would lead me too far into a department of knowledge which does not belong to this work, and to which I am not qualified to add anything new. But I must remark that, amongst the many physical anomalies that characterise that country, the greatest is the contrast between the degraded nature of her soil and vegetation, and the variety, beauty, perfection, and magnitude of her quadruped inhabitants. No other part of the world exhibits so many fine and noble species of animals. The elephant, the rhinoceros, the lion, the hippopotamus, the cameleopard, the gnoo, the zebra, the buffalo, and perhaps the unicorn, besides innumerable kinds of deer, divide our attention and admiration; and

we are perplexed to explain how an arid, barren, and almost uninhabitable land should be prolific in animal forms surpassing as a whole what are to be found in the richest and most fertile quarters of Europe, Asia, and America. How do the vast troops of graminivorous animals that swarm upon many of the African plains find subsistence? Spring-boks present themselves in flocks of ten or twelve thousand in tracts of country where there is no vegetation; and though the surface of Africa seems too barren and ungrateful to support one-tenth part of her animal population, flights of locusts annually overspread it in different directions, and dispute possession of the scanty herbage with the variety of nobler creatures that depend upon it for subsistence.

A view of the zoology of South Africa is completely adverse to the opinion which one is sometimes led to entertain, that animals are found in perfection and abundance in proportion to the fertility and exuberant vegetation of the country which they inhabit. New Holland surpasses South Africa in these respects, but the kangaroo is the largest animal found there, and it is almost confined to the northern parts; for according to Péron the naturalist, who

was attached to the grand expedition of discovery fitted out by Napoleon, a species of water-rat was the only quadruped observed along an extent of the south-west coast, comprehending eight or nine hundred miles.

With regard to the existence of the unicorn in South Africa, it may be remarked that it is as likely to be found there as anywhere else; and perhaps more so, if one considers what various and fantastic animal forms the country produces. The gnoo and the giraffe are in reality more singular beings than the unicorn; and were it not that the latter is mentioned in Scripture, and has been sought for in vain, no one would perceive anything marvellous in the existence of a single-horned beast shaped like a horse. Barrow seems inclined to believe that the unicorn inhabits the country north of the Orange River, and he says there is a general impression of the kind amongst the colonists; and that when he offered a large reward to any one who should bring a specimen of the animal to Cape Town, all who heard him seemed to think there could be no great difficulty in securing for themselves both the one and the other. He saw in a cave some Boschman drawings which appeared to him to be intended to represent the

animal in question; but Burchell is of opinion that he was mistaken, and that the Boschmen had delineated only one horn, under the idea that, in a side view of the head of any of the deer species, the other would lie exactly behind it, and therefore not be visible to the spectator. And this opinion is probably just; for it is observable in the hieroglyphical drawings of uncivilized nations, that the designer seldom executes the figures in detail, but only represents so much of each as will be sufficient to indicate what it is meant for.

In point of utility the ox stands pre-eminent amongst the animals of South Africa. Uniting the docility and the best qualities of the horse and the camel, it supplies the place of both, and its services are in such constant requisition, that it is not going too far to say, that the business of life could not be carried on in the colony without them. When the Dutch took possession of the country, the common price of a bullock was a knife or a pound of tobacco; and as long as the Hottentots were left undisturbed in the neighbourhood of the Cape, cattle were procurable at an almost equally low rate. But after the encroachments of the settlers had driven the aborigines into the interior, they

became very unwilling to sell their cows or oxen on any terms, and the former often had some difficulty in procuring the number required for the supply of the shipping in Table Bay; for it must be recollected that they did not begin to breed and rear cattle themselves, till they found that they could not easily obtain them in any other way. In all the journals of the early Dutch expeditions inland, the Hottentots are represented as being extremely averse to bartering away their flocks, and as generally concealing them, or sending them to a distance, when they had notice of the approach of Europeans. They, doubtless, had discovered by that time, the utter worthlessness of the articles which they were expected to accept in exchange for their domestic animals; but fearing to incense their visiters by refusing to traffic, they practised all kinds of evasion to escape their importunities and unreasonable demands.

Whether the cattle now reared in the colony are equal or inferior to those which the Hottentots possessed before their country was taken from them, is a point not easily ascertained, but I am inclined to adopt the latter opinion; for that people having a natural genius for tending and managing cattle, and being then unrestrain-

ed in their choice of pasture grounds, it may be supposed that their flocks had obtained a high state of perfection. Vailliant, whose veracity in points of this kind is free from suspicion, speaks with admiration of the noble oxen which he saw amongst the few independent hordes that still existed in the colony at the period of his travels; and both he and Kolbe describe the fighting oxen, called backleyers, which some tribes of Hottentots trained to war. These animals were not only useful in the field of battle, where they attacked and trampled upon the adverse party, but they also kept watch at the kraals like dogs, and would sally forth on the approach of any stranger, and maltreat him severely if he did not retire in good time, or if the herdsman neglected to call them back, when they never failed to obey his voice, and to return quietly to their former stations. Though no animals of this kind are now to be found in the colony, it is easy to believe that they formerly did exist, if one considers the docility of the present race of oxen, and the aversion which they testify to strangers, particularly in remote and unfrequented districts, where it is often dangerous to approach them.

Though the breed of cattle in South Africa

is doubtless deteriorated and confused by various intermixtures, there are still two distinct kinds of oxen there which are equally proper for labour—the one tall, long and heavy in the carcase, and the other much lower in stature, and more muscular and compact. It is generally agreed, that the latter sort endure continued fatigue and privation better than the former; and at the same time they do not require so much food, nor are they so long in collecting the necessary quantity, which are important considerations in a country so scantily provided with pasture as South Africa. But, on the other hand, the larger variety of oxen is invaluable in sandy districts, and in the passage of steep kloofs, where heavy loaded waggons can scarcely travel unless the animals drawing them are weighty and powerful, and capable of herculean efforts. The usual colour of both of these kinds of oxen is reddish brown, or black and white. Some are found entirely white, and some of a slate colour, but neither of them are much esteemed. In most parts of Europe the breath of horned cattle is fragrant and agreeable; but it is the reverse in South Africa, where the bitterness and acridity of the herbage upon which they chiefly feed, communicate a rank-

ness and pungency to their exhalations which are quite overpowering.

Perhaps no domestic animals in any part of the world labour so hard and fare so badly as the oxen of South Africa. Even while on the farm of their owner, they are never fed either in winter or summer, and depend entirely upon the natural pastures of the country for subsistence. During a journey, it is still worse with them; for after travelling seven or eight hours they are turned adrift to provide for themselves; it may be in a place that does not produce a blade of grass or a green leaf; they then either eat the stems of withered shrubs, or stand still in one spot looking disconsolately around them. And should the country afford pasture, it is likely enough that there may be no water at hand, and thirst prevents the distressed animals from feeding with relish and benefit, or perhaps from doing so at all. But even supposing that they experience none of the above privations, they generally become lame after travelling a considerable distance, for the hard and gravelly roads wear down their hoofs to the quick. This evil once begun, of course daily increases, and the traveller soon finds it necessary to leave the helpless creatures behind; when, unable to walk

about in search of food, they die of hunger, or are attacked and devoured by wild beasts. In various parts of the colony, and particularly in the Karroo, the skeletons of cattle which have perished in this way lie along the road-side in great numbers.

It has often been proposed to naturalize the camel in South Africa, and the character of the soil and climate there would seem to ensure the success of any experiment of the kind. The chief difficulty would be in the conveyance of the camels from India, which is the country where they could most conveniently be obtained. It would be necessary to fit up a vessel expressly for their accommodation, having at least nine feet between decks; nor would this alone suffice for their security and comfort, for these animals being very long-legged, and rather sluggish in their movements, they would be constantly liable to be overthrown by the rolling of the ship, unless some effectual means of assisting them to maintain their equilibrium were adopted. The camel would be a valuable gift to South Africa, whether for the transport of goods or the convenience of travellers. Nine thousand pounds' weight is considered a full load for twelve oxen, exclusive of the waggon

which contains it; and with this they cannot well travel for a continuance more than eighteen miles a day. A moderate-sized camel will carry a weight of eight or nine hundred pounds with ease, and travel thirty miles a day. In supporting hunger and thirst, he far surpasses the ox, great as that animal's powers of endurance in this respect are; and no herbage is so coarse or acrid as to be rejected by him in times of necessity. The use of the camel would also obviate the present difficulty or impossibility of travelling on horseback through many parts of the colony, large tracts of which afford no kind of pasture suitable for horses, and no habitations where a supply of grain can be obtained. But a single camel could carry grain sufficient for the subsistence of many horses for weeks together, and moreover make daily journeys of as great length as the latter could do for a continuance. Grandpré, in his Voyage in the Indian Ocean, makes the following remarks relative to the transportation of camels: — "I had one on board my vessel, which did not drink during the whole passage from Socotra to Pondicherry, which was seventeen days; nor did it eat in that time more than twenty pounds of millet straw. After the fourth day it seemed to rumi-

nate but little; about a quarter of an hour a day, as nearly as I could observe. As soon as it was landed, it ran to a spring and drank plentifully; and it appeared in as good condition as if it had suffered no want; though its thirst was great, its desire of food was by no means so. It still ate moderately, and with no more eagerness than usual."

The preceding sketch of the physical features of the colony would be incomplete, were I to omit mention of those peculiar tracts of country named Karroo, which occupy a very considerable proportion of its territory. The word Karroo is a Hottentot one, and probably means a dry and desert plain, such being the character of the regions to which it is applied. A range of mountains called the Swartzberg extends along the eastern side of South Africa, at the distance of about fifty or sixty miles from the sea, and walls off that breadth of coast from the interior; and it is within these mountains that the Karroo districts begin. The band of coast above alluded to, is comparatively fertile and well-watered, and it produces several considerable forests of tall and flourishing trees; but on the opposite side of the Swartzberg, the country assumes a very different character, and a much greater

elevation, and stretches out into a vast plain, eighty miles broad and three hundred in length. Here the traveller, when he has advanced a little way inland, finds an open horizon on every side, or at most sees only a few insignificant and isolated hills. The general soil is a bed of light-coloured clay, baked into flinty hardness by the sun, and unmoistened anywhere by springs or rivulets. A light coating of sand partially covers its surface, which in some places is strewed with small fragments of quartz, mostly of a circular form, and either loose or imbedded. The only woody shrubs produced here are a species of mimosa, yielding gum, and a dwarf willow; but the scantiness of their foliage is such that they afford no shade, and scarcely a sheltered place for a bird to build its nest. It is only in the winter that the Karroo can be traversed, because the rains then bring up even luxuriant herbage in certain quarters, and water is found collected in pools here and there; but between November and May everything of this kind has disappeared, and the bleached soil becomes uninhabitable by man or beast, and is never once furrowed by the wheel of a waggon or impressed by the foot of an ox or horse.

To the northward, the Karroo plains are

bounded by a range of mountains called the Nieuveldt, and resembling the Swartzberg in their elevation and general direction. Beyond these is a vast tract of country called the Grand Karroo, and as yet but partially explored. It is the land of that singular and interesting race of beings the Boschmen; and it would appear that its general character is even more sterile and repulsive than that of the smaller Karroo, which has just been described.

The climate of South Africa, particularly in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope, is healthy and agreeable, and altogether such as is seldom to be found under the same parallel of latitude in any other part of the world. During December, January, and February, the sun, it is true, is extremely powerful, and the south-east winds often blow with excessive fury, and prove a source of great annoyance to those persons who reside in unsheltered spots: but the remaining three-fourths of the year embrace a pleasing variety of sunshine and shade, and a temperature which ranges between 40° and 75° Fahrenheit. In the elevated lands in the interior of the colony, freezing weather occurs in June and July, and snow sometimes falls to a consider-

able depth. These months form the periodical rainy season of the colony, and the most barren districts are then clothed with at least a scanty verdure. Even the desert and barren Karroo plains just described appear carpeted with flowers, and enjoy one of the most enchanting climates in the world. Their atmosphere becomes inexpressibly soft, serene, and transparent; their natural solitariness loses all its horror, and is mellowed into a character of simple tranquillity; and the traveller passing through them at these times can with difficulty bring himself to believe that they will a few weeks after assume their annual garb of fiery aridness and unrelenting sterility. On this subject I speak from personal experience; and the enjoyment which I have derived from the climate and scenery of several parts of the Karroo plains will never be effaced from my recollection.

In traversing South Africa one looks in vain for any ancient monuments of human art however rude, or any vestiges of extinguished civilization. It has always appeared to me that the mind is more disposed to seek and expect something of this kind in a desert and desolate land, than in a luxuriant and

fertile one, infinitely better adapted for the abode and increase of the human species. The traveller, while he wanders through the forests of America, embowered in verdure and treading upon a rich and well-watered soil, or explores the enchanting solitudes of the Polynesian Islands, never thinks of inquiring for indications of the former existence of social man in such places, nor does he ask himself if they can have always been equally tenantless and abandoned. The luxuriance of the scene charms him into a state of placid repose, and a variety of pleasing objects engage his attention, and he feels satisfied with what he sees, and has no desire to add anything to the picture. It strikes him too, that Nature appears young and vigorous, and that, though her beauties remain untouched and untasted, it will not always be so; and that man, and arts, and commerce, may ere long find a congenial theatre of activity in the wilderness which surrounds him.

But his sensations are very different when he visits a country like South Africa. He sees decay and desolation on every side; and instead of considering the regions about him as lying in reversion for the benefit and occu-

pation of future generations, he regards them as having been exhausted by constant reproduction during a long series of ages, and as doomed ever to form a blank spot in the inhabited world. He imagines that they must formerly have been fertile and well-peopled, instead of having apparently been created in vain; and he seeks for monuments of antiquity, and imagines that such must lie buried under the soil.

No ruins of any description, no coins, no mounds of earth, no pieces of sculpture, no inscriptions, no articles of ancient manufacture, however simple or insignificant, have yet been found in South Africa; and it would seem, that it has never till lately been inhabited by a race of people superior in knowledge and civilization to the Hottentots. However, both Sparmann, and Campbell the missionary, saw in the interior of the country piles of stones like funeral monuments, which, though very inconsiderable in reality, seemed to them to be works demanding greater perseverance and labour than Hottentots would be able to command or bestow. These heaps of stones, and several ruined walls lately discovered near the Orange' River, (but which are believed by

some to have been erected about eighty years ago by an outlawed colonist,) form the only South African monuments of human art or industry whose date is supposed to be anterior to the occupation of the country by the Dutch in 1652.

# ABORIGINES OF SOUTH AFRICA.

No uncivilized people have been represented in a greater variety of lights than the Hottentots. Some of the earlier voyagers called them Troglodites — others regarded them as Anthropophagi — and a few described them as being addicted to sorcery. They have very little pretensions to any of these characters in the present day, and least of all to that of magicians. Kolbe, the first writer who professes to treat of the Hottentots in an accurate and authentic manner, attributes to them such a variety of ludicrous and apparently inconsistent habits and usages, as led many persons to doubt his veracity, and others to regard the aborigines of South Africa as the lowest and most brutal of human beings. While these impressions still continued, Vailliant gave a relation of his travels in South Africa; and, going into the opposite extreme, he painted the Hottentots in totally different colours, and even hinted that he had

found their society preferable to that of people of the higher classes in Paris. Sparmann, Thunberg, Barrow, and Lichtenstein, and other more modern writers, describe them as they really are, or rather were; for the race may be considered nearly extinct, unless we agree to view the Boschmen and Hottentots as one and the same people — an opinion very generally entertained by persons qualified to form a judgment upon the subject.

Kolbe says, that the nations inhabiting South Africa in 1705 were seventeen in number, and he gives their names, and the general position of their respective territories. The correctness of his enumeration has been doubted, and some of the names in his list are certainly rather suspicious—such as the Koopmans, for that word means a merchant in Dutch; but his accuracy on this subject is of little importance, so long as we know that the Cape of Good Hope was formerly well peopled by a native race possessing abundance of cattle, and forming a variety of different tribes. It is indeed difficult to believe this at present, when scarcely a remnant of them exists in the colony, and it is in vain to seek for any of them elsewhere. The Hottentots did not retire into the interior of their country to

avoid the encroachments of Europeans, as many of the natives of America have done. They had neither spirit nor inclination to acquire new territories by dispossessing their weaker neighbours; and in many instances Nature herself forbade their advancing or retroceding, by presenting sterile and uninhabitable deserts in every direction in which emigration was practicable. Most of the Hottentot nations, therefore, died out, or allowed themselves to be extirpated in their respective territories.

None of the earlier writers on the Cape attempt to give us any idea of the amount of the Hottentot population there when the Dutch first colonized it; but, judging from the number of kraals, and chiefs of kraals, described or alluded to in their journals, we may reasonably suppose that it was very considerable; and that if the handful of Europeans who first took possession of the country met with but a feeble resistance on the part of the natives, this was owing to the pacific disposition of the latter, and to the hopes which they entertained that their invaders would ere long depart of their own accord. It may be asked, how a region, consisting of unwatered deserts like South Africa, could support a large population of any kind?

But it is very certain that the character of the country in that respect has changed much for the worse within the last century, and that it still continues to do so, as I have already mentioned in the physical sketch of the colony. If Africa formerly enjoyed more abundant and regular supplies of water than it now does, it must have been proportionably more fertile in herbage and grass, which is proved by the multitude of cattle which existed everywhere at the period when the Dutch formed their first settlement; and the Hottentots, being entirely a pastoral race, would require nothing but their flocks for their subsistence and increase; hence there is little difficulty in believing that their country once abounded with large communities of people.

Three causes, more or less rapid in their operation, have led to the extinction of the Hottentot tribes. First, their impoverishment, arising from the encroachments and exactions of Europeans; secondly, the abuse of spirituous liquors; and, lastly, the introduction of the small pox. This last has always been one of the most favourite and characteristic gifts of civilization when she has come to diffuse her vaunted blessings amongst men in a state of barbarism; and

it is very certain that the Hottentots experienced its full malignity. Their slovenly mode of life —their free use of the grossest kinds of animal food, and their habit of crowding together in their small huts, would alike increase the virulence of the disease, and favour its extensive propagation.

The Hottentots have generally been regarded as the lowest and the most degraded beings in the scale of humanity; but this opinion cannot be correct, if it be true that the domestication of animals is the first definite step towards the civilized state. These people not only possessed flocks of cattle, but had the art of training them both for the saddle and for war; and as far as respects the arts of pastoral life, they were little inferior to the Tartars of Northern Europe.

The disgusting habits and carnivorous propensities of the Hottentots, combined with the meanness of their habitations, and the barbarousness of their costume, have tended more than anything else to render them objects of contempt and aversion. But it does not appear that their capacity was on a level with their degraded style of life; for the Dutch, according to Kolbe, were in the habit of sending embassies to various tribes, and making treaties

with them; and the same writer states, that the Hottentots were often employed in situations of confidence and responsibility; as was more particularly the case with one of them named Klaas, who was afterwards banished to Robben Island on an accusation which proved to be a false one. However, we cannot easily believe with Kolbe, that every Hottentot kraal had a regular form of government, and various officers to enforce it, such as judges, magistrates, priests, and physicians; nor is it likely, that when the tribe called Heykoms engaged in battle, it was customary for their chief to sit upon an adjoining eminence and play the flagelet, his subjects being bound to continue the contest till he chose to terminate his performance, or till the adverse party took flight.

It is unnecessary here to describe minutely the personal appearance of the Hottentots. Every one knows that they are of an olive complexion and moderate stature, and that they differ from all other races of men in the remarkable triangularity of their visage. This has led some of their calumniators to consider them as a link between the baboon species and our own. Such an opinion requires no serious refutation; but it may be remarked that all animals of the simia

tribe have very long and clumsy fingers and toes, while, on the contrary, the Hottentots are distinguished for the shortness and delicacy of these members, to such a degree that the hands and feet of many of the men resemble those of females of the highest class in Europe. Indeed, this constitutes the only agreeable personal quality to which the Hottentots of either sex have the least pretension; and I am convinced, that even the Peruvian ladies, who esteem a small foot an indispensable point of female beauty, would find something to admire in that respect in the aborigines of South Africa.

No individuals of the genuine and unmixed race of Hottentots are now to be met with, except in the more remote parts of the colony, and even there they are daily decreasing in number. The few that do exist gain a miserable subsistence by hiring themselves to the boors as herdsmen, for which service they generally receive their food and thirty or forty shillings a year. Most of them wear jackets and pantaloons of buckskin; but a few retain their original dress called the kross, which is a scanty cloak formed of the skins of sheep or jackals, or of any other animal that happens to be procurable. I saw a whole family of this kind tend-

ing cattle in the Karroo. The children were entirely naked, but the men and women wore the kross, and their appearance corresponded in every particular with Vailliant's descriptions. All the Hottentots of this kind speak Dutch, or at least a few words of it, and a great number of them are altogether unacquainted with their native language. No independent horde of this people now exists within the bounds of the colony.

The bastard Hottentots (as they are called) who have replaced the primitive tribes, are common over all South Africa, and form a large proportion of its population. These people present a vast intermixture of different races, but the Malay seems to predominate; though many of them are of European or of Mozambique descent. Scarcely any of the bastards speak or understand the aboriginal language of the country, nor do they retain many of the customs or traditions of their ancestors; and, therefore, they are quite unable to give any information respecting the early history and condition of the Hottentot race; and they are not disposed to communicate what they do know upon the subject, for in general they feel very unwilling to admit that they have any Hottentot blood in their veins.

It is chiefly in their carnivorous propensities that these bastards resemble the aborigines of the soil. They are contented to live exclusively upon animal food, and care little or nothing for bread and vegetables; and they take particular pleasure in butchering and quartering cattle. When travelling, I always found that the killing of a sheep was the signal amongst my people for the suspension of all other business. The skin was first taken off with the greatest care and neatness, and then the entrails were inspected, and cautiously removed, and deposited on the ground in regular order. The division of the carcase was next performed with much expertness; and the head and quarters were hung in the form of a quincunx on the branches of a bush or tree, if either happened to be near the spot. But the whole process, so far from being conducted in that coarse and revolting manner which the primitive Hottentots used to employ on similar occasions, was remarkable for neatness and nicety.

The bastards also retain in a great measure the natural indolence of their ancestors. Kolbe, Vailliant, Sparmann, and Barrow, and, in short, all the travellers who have visited and described South Africa, mention the laziness of the Hottentots as surpassing that of any other people

whatever; and though their descendants do not inherit it to that extreme degree, still, if left to themselves, they will spend the day, and every day, in basking in the sun or lying by the fire, indifferent even to the calls of hunger, should the gratification of these be attended with much trouble. But it must be admitted that this quality, inconvenient and reprehensible as it is, renders them extremely patient and enduring at times when no exertions of their own could relieve or remove their sufferings. For instance, when travelling in bad weather, or when exposed to privations of any kind, their impassibility is truly marvellous; and it would appear that the real cause of their indolence is merely an obtuseness of sensation, which in particular circumstances stands them in the same stead as energy of character and mental vigour would do; for the Hottentot, altogether destitute of these qualities, bears cold, hunger, and thirst, with a degree of patience and firmness which in other people might receive the name of heroism.

But the life of a Hottentot in the service of a traveller is one of luxury and repose, compared with that led by him who goes into the interior of the country to purchase cattle and

drive them home. There are many Hottentots who make a profession of this, and who engage with any one requiring their services to proceed to the Karroo in the end of winter, and buy any number of sheep or oxen, and bring them to their employer wherever he may live. These men are often trusted with large sums of money, and they never abuse the confidence reposed in them. Having made their purchases, they proceed to drive the cattle to their place of destination, perhaps two hundred miles distant; and it is here that their dangers and hardships begin; for besides being on the watch all day to keep together a large flock travelling through an open country, they must protect it at night from wolves or lions, and from the depredations of cattle-stealers, who are common enough in most parts of the colony. On this account the Hottentot perhaps finds it necessary to sit awake all night with his gun in his hand; and the greater the darkness is, the more constantly must he be upon the alert. Neither does he enjoy the assistance of the shepherd's dog, so useful in similar situations in Europe; for though he generally keeps several animals of the kind, they have neither sufficient courage nor sagacity to be much depended upon, except

to give an alarm on the approach of danger. A single Hottentot will in this manner drive several thousand sheep two or three hundred miles without losing one of them, and all for the trifling remuneration of twenty-five or thirty shillings a month.

The nature of the religious system of the aboriginal Hottentots has often been discussed in the writings of travellers. Some deny that these people had ever any notion of the existence of a supreme being; while others assert that they worshipped the moon, and not a few assure us that they held in adoration a species of mantis, and also sacrificed to an evil principle: but however opposed to each other these authors may be in the above points, they all agree that the Hottentots were particularly reserved with respect to their religion, and generally tried to mislead those who questioned them upon the subject. It seems very certain, at least, that they had not any regular system of mythology, or any defined code of belief; and that they neither practised religious ceremonies, nor raised altars or temples to their deities. Had the aboriginal Hottentots inhabited an arctic or antarctic region, or a burning desert, and been forced to spend their days in seeking and procuring the means of subsistence, one would be little astonished at

the meagreness and obscurity of their theological system; but they possessed numerous flocks, and lived in a country abounding with game, and, in short, enjoyed ease and plenty, and had leisure enough to exercise their faculties and their imagination, and to observe the course of nature; and one would suppose that under such favourable circumstances a system of religion more or less rude must have been developed. The Greenlanders, the Laplanders, the Samoieds, the Kamtschatkans, and the most northern Indians of America, have their respective mythologies, some of which are both complicated and poetical; yet all these people suffer privations and physical inconveniences sufficient to prevent the birth of any reflections unconnected with their personal necessities and the common business of life. How comes it then that a pastoral nation, inhabiting a temperate climate, should have been so far behind them in the exercise of their faculties, and in the number and variety of their ideas? I believe that an answer to this inquiry can only be found in that mysterious and unaccountable deterioration of men, animals, and plants, which is observable throughout the whole southern hemisphere beyond the tropic of Capricorn.

We may safely presume that the aboriginal Hottentots were Manicheans, or that they admitted the existence of a good and an evil principle. This is the religion of nature in all parts of the world, and the only one which addresses itself to the senses and reason of an uninstructed and uncivilized man. Let us imagine that an individual of the kind has built a house for himself, and that he has a wife and children, and a flock of cattle, and a cultivated spot of ground which annually produces fruit and grain for his subsistence, and that he has for some time enjoyed the blessings of abundance and prosperity. Should a neighbouring torrent suddenly overflow, and sweep away his house, and drown his children and cattle, and devastate his lands, he will never think of attributing these misfortunes to the Being who created himself, and the animals and things necessary for his happiness and convenience. It will appear to him to be an inconsistency to suppose that the Giver of good can also be the source of evil, and can take a pleasure in destroying his own works. The idea of the existence of a separate and malignant power, who is the author of his distresses, will immediately present itself; and

he will recall the various instances of human misery that have occurred within his observation, and endeavour to explain them in the same way. Should it appear to him that there is a predominance of good in the world, he will doubt the reality of this, by considering that if the amount of the good really exceeds that of the evil, the beneficent spirit who produces the first must be more powerful than the malignant one who occasions the latter. But if it really be so, he will argue, why does not he altogether destroy his adversary, or prevent him from exercising any influence over the world and its inhabitants. Thus forced to adopt the doctrine of Manicheism in its simplest form, he will seek consolation for the dark and discouraging character of such a system of belief in indolence and apathy and sullen indifference. For, as it is his impression that the powers producing good and evil are equally balanced, he will conceive that any homage or worship or exertion on his own part to please either is unnecessary, and may perhaps be injurious to him, by causing greater offence in the being from whom it is withheld than approbation in him upon whom it is bestowed. Like the Hottentot, he will

build no temples, and erect no altars, and make no sacrifices, and will avoid entering into religious speculations, and feel averse even to hear the subject mentioned.

With respect to the opinion that the Hottentots worshipped a species of grasshopper, I am satisfied that it is an incorrect one. I never could learn anything confirmatory upon the subject while I was in South Africa; and it seems probable that the aborigines of the country had merely some popular prejudice in favour of that kind of insect, similar to what now exists among the peasantry of Europe in regard to the cricket. What nation would choose for a deity one of the feeblest and most insignificant of animal beings? Even the ancient Egyptians, who worshipped, or rather held sacred, a great variety of animals, did not include any insects in their number; for though the scarabæus is frequently introduced among their hieroglyphics, it does not appear that they paid it any particular reverence or even respect, but merely employed it as a symbol of strength. In Hindostan also, where a considerable number of animals are reputed sacred, we find no vestiges of the worship of insects, though they are received into the ani-

mal hospitals there, and considered worthy of human care and attention.

In their general character the aboriginal Hottentots were mild, timid, and free from deceit, and strangers to avarice and ambition. But their good qualities were shaded and overpowered by a strong degree of constitutional melancholy, which was also unfavourable to the exercise and developement of their faculties, and made them appear stupid and even brutal. It appears that they lived in the utmost harmony amongst themselves, and that crimes and acts of violence were almost unknown in their kraals. Their wars were neither frequent, sanguinary, nor of long duration; for they had no idea of military glory, and the subject of contest was generally a flock of sheep or a few dozen of oxen. They had made no advances in arts or agriculture, and had fewer notions of astronomy and medicine than the generality of uncivilized tribes. Neither were they disposed for change or improvement; and it is probable, that had not Europeans deprived them of their country, they would have remained till the present day in the condition in which they were found by the first circumnavigators of Africa.

Rousseau asserts that men who use a large proportion of animal food are always of a cruel and vindictive nature, and he brings forward the English as an evidence of the justness of this opinion; which was probably suggested by some crude notions which he had acquired respecting the Indians of North America. The Hottentots prove the untenableness of this theory; animal food was their universal and exclusive diet, for they cultivated no grain or vegetables, and their country produced neither spontaneously, yet were they gentle in demeanour and humane in their dispositions, and scarcely susceptible of violent or angry passions. I am, however, willing to admit that Rousseau's opinion may hold good with reference to tropical climates; for the use of animal food is prohibited, or at least very much restricted, in all the religious systems of India, most of which are founded upon maxims of sound policy and a deep knowledge of human nature.

The origin of the Hottentots is as obscure as that of all other uncivilized nations, and of most civilized ones. They have a tradition that their ancestors came to South Africa in a *trekhuis,* or ship, and that they consisted of only one family,

who propagated the species amongst themselves. Incest was formerly common in all their tribes; and its existence may be explained on the authority of this tradition, which probably seemed in their opinion to render it admissible. But the story of the *trekhuis* is doubtless of European origin, for the Hottentots had no canoes, boats, or vessels of any description when they were first visited by the Dutch; and even at present their descendants hold the sea in particular horror, and can scarcely ever be induced to trust themselves upon it. It happened while I was travelling along the eastern coast of the colony, that I mentioned within hearing of my Hottentot attendants, that I should perhaps embark at Algoa Bay and return to Cape Town by sea. They immediately came to me in a body, and declared that if I had any intention of the kind, they would quit my service and proceed homewards, for that they would rather die than go on board ship. I assured them that I would attend to their feelings in that respect; but from that moment they became dissatisfied with their situation and distrustful of myself, and I was happy when circumstances enabled me to dispense with their services and discharge them. The master of a coaster informed me

that he had once, while lying in Algoa Bay, allured a Hottentot on board his vessel, and carried him to Cape Town, a distance of five hundred miles, where, however, he did not allow him to go on shore. After a few days, he set sail again for the former port, and on arriving there, landed his impatient passenger, who, shuddering at what he had undergone during his two voyages, immediately quitted the place, though he had for many years before resided in it, and hastening into the interior, was never afterwards seen or heard of by my informant, though he had often made inquiries respecting him. It is worthy of remark, that the Tambookie Caffres, inhabiting the eastern coast of Africa beyond the Great Fish River, have much the same aversion to the sea. According to Barrow, they have no boats or canoes, and never eat any kinds of fish or other marine production. The aboriginal Hottentots ate only those fish that have scales.

These superstitious prejudices regarding the sea remind us of those entertained by the ancient Egyptians, whose dread of that element seems to have chiefly arisen from the impossibility of finding and embalming the bodies of those who might be drowned in it. According

to their belief, the soul immediately after death entered a purgatory called Amenthe, from whence it was sooner or later removed by a kind of resurrection, which restored it to the same body which it had formerly animated. Hence the general necessity of preserving the corpses of deceased persons, whose final beatification would have been retarded, or altogether prevented, by the want of the requisite vehicle for the reception of the spirit after its release from purgatory. It is true that individuals of eminent virtue and blameless lives were supposed, according to the Egyptian theology, to be transferred to heaven the moment they died, so that they had no farther use for their bodies, and might have dispensed with the embalming of them; but as no one could be certain that he merited a transition so happy and sudden, he naturally regarded the security and preservation of his body as an object of the highest and most serious importance. The Greeks, too, considered the want of funeral rites to be a terrible evil, and on that account they had a particular horror of perishing at sea. In cases of shipwreck they used to tie their most valuable effects to their bodies, and with them a piece of parchment, intimating that the articles accompanying

it were to be the reward of any one who might happen to pick up their corpses, and bestow upon them the necessary funeral rites.

It may appear to many of my readers that I have dwelt too long upon the Hottentots; but I feel satisfied that those who love to examine minutely the different shades of human character and conditions, will be of different opinion; and under this impression I will now proceed to enter into some details respecting the Boschmen, another nation yet existing in part of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope. I am aware that many writers of the highest authority regard the Hottentots and Boschmen as one and the same race, and consider that the peculiarities of character which the latter present arise from the nature of the country which they inhabit. Any discussion upon this subject would be out of place here, for it is my object to represent men as they are, instead of conjecturing what they may have been; but still it is but just to remark, that the traditions of the Hottentots themselves support the above theory; for they say that their ancestors having been in the habit of treating their children with great severity, many of the latter deserted their homes, and, flying northwards, formed themselves into a

separate community, which is that now called Boschmen.

This story seems to me to be as little worthy of credit as that of the *trekhuis;* for all the early travellers in South Africa describe the aboriginal Hottentots as being remarkably indulgent to their offspring, and as even allowing them the privilege of beating their mothers, as soon as a particular ceremony had established their claims to manhood; and the few exceptions to this parental mildness that might occur, could not lead to the formation of a tribe so numerous and widely diffused as the Boschmen formerly were; for the colonists have within the last century destroyed an immense number of them, on account of their inveterate and incessant practice of stealing cattle.

The proper country of the Boschmen is the Grand Karroo desert, lying to the north of the Nieuveldt range of mountains, and traversed by the Orange River. Nowhere does Nature present a more horrid aspect, or a character more unimprovable by the labour of man. There it sometimes scarcely rains for years together; and the hardened argillaceous soil, producing only a few bulbous plants and some species of, *euphorbia,* affords no subsistence to

graminivorous animals, and presents one vast and unbroken solitude, occasionally visited by flocks of ostriches and by the shy rhinoceros. Most of the hills, which seldom exceed eight hundred feet in height, are of a conical shape, and stand detached from each other, and consist of quartz discoloured by the action of the elements, and utterly barren of vegetation. But they are not unfrequently found closely grouped together; and the valleys thus formed are deep, tortuous, and gloomy, and as sterile as the plains, and equally destitute of water. Small birds are very rare in this tract of country; and serpents, lizards, and locusts are its only stationary and permanent inhabitants.

In one respect the Boschmen differ from every other people. They are placed in a country which neither produces the necessaries of life, nor can be made to produce them. It is too often the practice of civilized men to accuse savages of indolence, and to conclude that all of them indiscriminately could improve their condition were they inclined to do so. Without inquiring into particulars, or collecting the necessary information, they consider as brutal and degraded beings all those of the human species who do not erect buildings, study the art

of war, and cultivate manners, like themselves. Wedded to the prejudices of civilized life, they view with contempt the arts and ingenuity exercised for preservation and subsistence by men in a state of nature, though these may require infinitely greater apprehension and industry than belong to the mechanics and artizans of our most populous cities. The weaver, by moving his shuttle backwards and forwards ten hours a day, procures the means of purchasing the necessaries of life, and the blacksmith obtains the same by as many thousand strokes with his hammer; but the Boschman requires in a manner to vary his trade every week, or perhaps oftener, and his whole existence is one continued scene of expertness, resource, and invention.

Instead then of contemning the Boschman, and viewing him with repugnance, because he often subsists on serpents, lizards, locusts, and the larvæ of white ants, let us admire that he contrives to live at all in the country which Nature has assigned him. To the extreme scarcity of game there, is added an extraordinary difficulty of killing it, for the total want of trees or brushwood renders the hunter's approach visible at a great distance, and it is only

by creeping on his belly for hours or even days together, or lying flat on the ground covered with sand, that he can get a chance of discharging his arrows with effect.

Should the Boschman fail in the chase of animals, as often occurs, he must seek for reptiles or insects to supply his wants, and in the defect of these, he is forced to eat certain liliacious bulbs which are found in most parts of the Karroo. At night he scoops a hole in the ground and lies down in it, or creeps into a bush, and brings its branches or twigs together over his head in the form of an arch. It is not laziness that prevents his building a house, which he might do with sand and stones, but the absolute necessity of his continually changing his abode in order to find the requisite supply of water and food. The latter he is obliged to eat half-raw, because he cannot procure sufficient fuel to cook it thoroughly. His life is thus an alternation of sufferings, and he is always either fatigued or hungry, or cold or wet, or thirsty or expiring from want. No art or industry on his own part can improve his condition. The arid waste which he inhabits admits of no cultivation; were he to attempt to keep flocks, they would die for want of pasture

and water; and if he abandoned his own country and attempted to settle in any neighbouring one, he would be massacred by its inhabitants or reduced to slavery.

The Boschman, notwithstanding his unhappy mode of life, is neither deficient in apprehension nor common sense. The few who are in the service of the colonists, particularly the boys, are remarkable for quickness of capacity, and they make excellent domestics. Some travellers have asserted, that the social state of the Boschmen is so low that they have no distinction of names. I can testify from my own observation that this opinion is altogether unfounded, and that each individual amongst them has a name which is applied to himself individually. However, it is very evident, that no people could better dispense with the use of personal names than the Boschmen; for it is seldom that more than two or three families are found together, the country not affording subsistence for a larger number in one spot. Herodotus says,—"Of all mankind of whom we have any knowledge, the Atlantes alone have no distinction of names; the body of the people are termed Atlantes, but their individuals have no appropriate appellation." However,

the correctness of this statement ought to remain in doubt, until modern observation has furnished us with a fact of a similar kind.

I saw five genuine Boschmen in the gaol at Beaufort in the year 1830. Two of them were confined on charges of murder, and the others for stealing and killing oxen. They were the first individuals of unmixed race that had come under my observation, and I did not find in them that resemblance to the Hottentots which I had expected; for their visages were far from presenting the triangularity of form which characterises the former nation. These Boschmen were tolerably muscular and well-shaped, except that their bellies were flaccid and protuberant. Their lips were large and projecting, and their eyes and noses very small, and the latter very flat. Their eyelids always remained half closed, the ciliary processes being nearly parallel, except when something excited their attention. Their foreheads were small and contracted, and their hands and feet delicate, and even diminutive. They seemed much at their ease, and rather of a cheerful disposition. The senior of the party understood no language but his own, and said that neither himself nor his countrymen used

or even comprehended one word of the Hottentot language, and that his nation was a distinct people, and that all of them had names. Observing him chewing a kind of herb, we asked him if it was *dacca* (wild hemp, which the Hottentots use for smoking). He answered, "No." "Is it like tobacco?"—"No," replied he, "it is better, it makes me feel drunk."

One of his companions, a boy about fifteen years old, had been deprived of the first joint of both of his little fingers. He informed us that his mother having lost her first child soon after its birth, had mutilated him in that way to prevent his dying also, and that it was a custom of the Boschwomen to do the same thing in similar cases. This seems to prove that these people are not so indifferent about the lives of their children as has often been represented. In those instances in which they have been seen to destroy their offspring, it is probable that they dreaded their falling into the hands of the colonists, and being reduced to slavery; and a gentleman at Beaufort informed me, that a magistrate of his acquaintance had once, when pursuing some Boschmen cattle-stealers, found a strangled child, which the fugitives had, he supposed, put to death

and left behind them, that it might not encumber them in their flight.

The Boschman language may be considered the most extraordinary of articulated sounds. That of the Hottentots has long been celebrated for the peculiar clicking of the tongue which attends its pronunciation, and the Boschman dialect presents this peculiarity in a much stronger and more impressive degree, at least two-thirds of the words being spoken with that singular accompaniment, which few Europeans are ever able to acquire, or successfully imitate. I observed that a sentence is expressed in the Boschman language in much fewer syllables than in Dutch or English, and that these are uttered nearly without any hiatus, while the same sounds are frequently repeated with a slight variation of accent; from which I conclude that it belongs to the class of languages called Polysynthetic, which have hitherto been regarded as peculiar to North America, and of which the distinguishing idiom is the following. The person expressing an action or idea, instead of employing a whole sentence for that purpose, selects the roots of the principal words required, and joining these together, composes from them one long word, which gives his

meaning almost as fully and definitely as ten or twelve words would do in a language constructed upon the common principles. Those who insist that the Hottentots and Boschmen are the same people, bring forward the similarity in the character of their languages in support of their opinion; but it must be remembered that the clicking of the tongue is also common in an inferior degree to those spoken by the Caffres and the Betchuanas, each of whom forms a distinct nation, having as little resemblance to the Hottentots and Boschmen, as they have to each other.

It may easily be supposed that amongst the Boschmen all the arts are in a low state of advancement; for how can men, whose lives are employed in obtaining a sufficiency of food to satisfy the cravings of hunger, find time to weave, or to build, or to use the knife or the chisel? The Karroo desert does not even afford wood proper for bows and arrows, and its inhabitants obtain this from the banks of the Orange River, and manufacture it into these weapons, which they use with extraordinary dexterity and effect; but which nevertheless would avail them little, either in the chase or for self-defence, did they employ them in their simple

form only. Nature has here supplied a powerful auxiliary, and this they have done their utmost to improve. The Boschmen anoint their arrows with a poison, which is the most virulent, fatal, and concentrated substance of the kind yet discovered, and the mode of manufacturing which is fully known only to themselves. Whether materials of this description are found in greater perfection in South Africa than anywhere else, or whether the Boschmen merely excel other people in the preparation of them, is uncertain; but there is no doubt that neither the Ticuna poison of the Indians of the Amazon River, nor the Wourali poison of the natives of Guiana, equals in virulence the substance now in question.

Thirty or forty years ago, when the Boschmen and colonists were continually at war, many of the latter fell victims to their arrows, which they generally discharged in ambuscade; and even in the present day, instances of the kind sometimes occur. The Boschmen employ two sorts of arrows — one armed with a triangular piece of iron, and the other with a pointed fragment of bone, jagged on the sides, and having a piece of quill attached to it in such a manner as to prevent its being drawn out of the

flesh of the wounded object. The first they use chiefly for killing animals, and the second in their combats with men. Nor is the same kind of poison applied to both, a composition of superior virulence being prepared expressly for the destruction of the human species. The bone is endued with a thin layer of this, which is allowed to dry, and then a coating of gummy varnish is laid over it to prevent its cracking or dropping off; but the nature of the last application is such, that the moment the arrow penetrates the flesh, the animal heat causes it to dissolve, and the poison is thus brought into contact with the wound, and quickly absorbed. Death generally follows in six or eight hours, and is preceded by livid swelling of the body and convulsions. Those individuals who have recovered from the wounds of a Boschman arrow must have been struck with the first sort, as I have reason to believe that the kind last described never enters the flesh without proving fatal.

The materials which enter into the composition of the Boschman poison are by no means accurately known. Lichtenstein says that its principal ingredients are the venom of snakes, mixed with the concentrated juice of the bulb

of the *hæmanthus toxicarius*. He mentions that a certain substance of a dark brown colour and resinous appearance, and highly deleterious in its nature, is found by the Boschmen amongst the rocks, and employed by them in anointing their arrows; but not having had the good fortune to meet with this singular production, he is unable to give any farther account of it. But Mr. Rhynweldt, the civil commissioner at Graaff Reynet, who is intimately acquainted with the Boschman country and its inhabitants, informed me that the venom extracted from the body of a large black spider was the kind of poison which the Boschmen esteemed best, and considered most destructive. The Indians on the river Amazon compose a poison for their arrows of great strength, and very effectual in killing animals, but by no means proportionably fatal to the human species. According to Condamine, it is made by boiling certain plants, particularly lianas, and more than thirty kinds of herbs enter into its composition; but he justly supposes that not one half of these add to its efficacy.

In Martyr's Decades of the Ocean, translated by Lok, we have the following quaint account of the manner in which poisons are manufac-

tured by the Indians of the Oronoco :—"They have olde women skilful in that art, which at certaine times they shutte up against their willes, giving them matter or stuffe for that service; they keepe them in two dayes, wherein they boile the ointment, and having finished the same at length, they lette them out; if they find the olde women in healthe, so that they be not halfe deade through the force of the poyson, they grievously punish them and cast away the ointment as unprofitable, (for they affirme that the force of the same is so great that through the smell thereof while it is made it almost killeth any that make it.)"

The black spider above mentioned is well known all over the colony as being of a dangerous nature, and it is believed that many individuals have died of its bite. In boldness and ferocity it exceeds any other insect with which I am acquainted. I have frequently met with them in the Karroo, and always found, when I touched them with a stick, that, instead of making off in alarm, they would turn round upon me, and either firmly grasp the end of the instrument that annoyed them, or rush towards my feet, obliging me to defend myself or to retire.

Such extreme irritability alone would seem to indicate the venomous qualities of this spider. Lichtenstein says, that this is the test by which the Boschmen choose snakes for the composition of the poison for their arrows; and that they not only give a preference to the most active and restless animals of the kind, but are in the habit of enraging and tormenting them before they kill them, in order to increase the power and acrimony of their venomous secretion. It is difficult to determine whether the Boschman's theory on this point be just or not; but I must remark that Niewhoff, in his Voyages to the East Indies, mentions that the Javanese obtain a poison from a species of lizard called gekko, by suspending it by the tail for several days, the uneasiness of such a position causing a fluid to exude from its body which is highly deleterious to man and beast. Two other animals besides snakes and spiders, reputed highly venomous, and believed to be employed by the Boschmen in the manufacture of their arrow-poison, exist in South Africa. One is a species of *Julus*. It is a caterpillar, five or six inches long, hideous in appearance, the upper part of its body being cased in transverse scales of a deep brown

colour, and its belly covered with long hair. It has thirty or forty legs, like those of a centipede, and when not in motion it generally lies rolled up in a circular form. The Hottentots assert that its bite is certain death. The other animal alluded to is a lizard, called gietze by the colonists, which is said to be even more formidable than the reptile above described; however, it must be of very rare occurrence, as some people altogether deny its existence, and very few can be found who profess to have seen it, or to have had evidence of its dangerous qualities. I cannot avoid remarking here, that it is a common and vulgar prejudice, that all animals endowed with poisonous properties are ever on the watch to exercise these upon man, and never fail sooner or later to show their malignant nature by biting him. If they have not done this, it is erroneously supposed that they must be harmless, which is evidently a false conclusion; for we may be in the habit of daily seeing and approaching them for years together without suffering from their presence. Many an individual has lived nearly a century in a country infested by the most venomous snakes and never experienced any injury from them; and

in the same way generations may pass before it happens that any particular species of animals is incited to render a single individual the victim of its deadly bite or sting. Traditions on this subject are not to be despised; and it is better to wait till accident proves their falsity, than to run the risk of verifying them by rashness or bold experiment.

The colonists have always stood in a less pacific relation to the Boschmen than to the Hottentots. The causes of this are not difficult to explain. The Boschmen have from time immemorial been robbers by profession; and when Europeans began to settle in their neighbourhood, they committed upon them the same kind of depredations that they had been accustomed to practise almost with impunity upon the Hottentots; but they soon found that they had a very different sort of people to deal with, and that their plundering expeditions were now attended with infinitely greater danger than formerly, and that death was what they had to expect in the event of their being captured or detected in the execution of them. This, instead of repressing their freebooting propensities, served to exasperate them against the colonists, and made them not

only study how they might rob them with greater address, but also led them to commit many wanton acts of violence, in revenge for the severity that was always exercised towards themselves. At first, the colonists had viewed the Boschmen in the light of enemies only when they stole their cattle; but at length, incensed by their retaliating system, they denounced vengeance against the whole nation, and sacrificed the guilty and the innocent without discrimination whenever they found an opportunity. If information was received that a number of Boschmen had assembled together in any particular spot, a commando was immediately called out by the Landdrost or Veldtcornet. No one thought it necessary to inquire whether the savages had done any evil, or intended to do any. A body of armed men marched against them, and shot as many as possible; and being assailed in their turn by showers of poisoned arrows, several were most likely wounded, and being carried home by their companions, they died in agony, and a view of their sufferings served to increase and perpetuate amongst their children and relatives their natural and habitual hatred of the Boschmen.

It would be a task equally painful and unprofitable to enter into the history of those kind of transactions. Much has been written upon the subject by contending parties, and many things brought to light which had better have been allowed to remain in obscurity and oblivion.

Taking an abstract view of the question, it seems impossible to condemn the Boschmen for stealing cattle from their neighbours. Their own country denies them the means of subsistence, and can we expect that they should quietly and contentedly sit down in the desert and perish from want? The colonists have sometimes endeavoured to obviate this difficulty, by supplying the Boschmen with small flocks of sheep and oxen, in order that they might rear them and breed others, and thus be reclaimed from their marauding life. But they complain that these donations of cattle never in one instance produced the effect intended, for the Boschmen on receiving them, merely removed to some distance, and began to kill and eat them, and continued to do so till they were all consumed, and then recommenced their depredations.

This was just what ought to have been expected, because the Boschmen knew very well

that their own country did not afford either pasture or water for cattle, and that the animals, if driven about in search of these essential articles, would soon become lean and incapable of travelling, besides being constantly exposed to the attacks of lions and wolves, and to the rapacity of other individuals of their nation who had not partaken of the bounty of the colonists. It could not be expected that the Boschmen should point out this to their benefactors, and refuse their gifts; they accepted these, and turned them to what they considered the best account.

I do not mean to assert that there are no places in the Boschman country where cattle might be reared; but of what avail would it be to supply a few families with herds, while the rest of the community were left destitute of them? The latter would immediately plunder the former, and war and dissension would add to the misery of the nation. On the other hand, the whole body of the people could not keep flocks, because, as has already been remarked, there is not pasture or water sufficient for any considerable number of these; and supposing that every Boschman family were to receive an equal proportion of cattle for breeding,

the stronger ones would take possession of all the fertile lands, leaving their unprovided fellow-countrymen to wander about the Karroo deserts, where their sheep and oxen would shortly perish, leaving them as poor and miserable as ever. Therefore no human aid can effectually ameliorate the condition of the Boschmen, or correct their habits of plunder, while they remain within their present territories. They require a new country, and who can give them that? or would they accept it were it offered to them? It is therefore as vain and useless to disclaim against their vices, as it would be to inquire how it happens that several thousand individuals have become inhabitants of a region from which Nature has pertinaciously withheld everything calculated for the comfort, prosperity, and happiness of man.

The Boschmen, though always an infinitely less considerable people than the Hottentots, have survived the extinction of the latter, and are likely to exist many years more; for it is not probable that Europeans will ever seek to deprive them of their present territories. However, the occasional occurrence of seasons of extraordinary dryness even now destroys no small number of them, by causing a scarcity of

game and water; and it appears that their women bear comparatively few children, and that a large part of these die in infancy; so that the Boschman population must be rapidly on the decline. The whole nation is supposed to consist of not more than three thousand persons, but this is entirely a matter of conjecture. Indeed the condition of men in these countries is such, that their extinction is little to be regretted; for they are the most wretched of created beings, and the business of their lives seems to be that of showing what amount of physical misery our species can endure. Campbell, the missionary, informs us in his Travels in *South Africa*, that having met with a Boschman, he was desirous of inquiring into the state of his ideas, and he accordingly asked him what he thought was the *worst* thing a man could do? To this question, which would prove a puzzling one to the greater number of civilized beings, the Boschman was not able to make any satisfactory reply; and his interrogator found it necessary to change his ground, and demanded of him what was the *best* thing a man could do. "His answer to this question was extremely affecting," observes Mr. Campbell. "'All my life,' said he, 'I have seen only

evil, and never any good, therefore I cannot tell what is best.'"

The moral and physical degradation of the Boschmen has generally been supposed to exceed that of any other part of the human species; but the correctness of such an opinion is questionable, at least in so far as respects their degree of intelligence, and the number of their ideas. The difficulties which they experience in procuring the necessaries of life, and the privations which they suffer, are perhaps unequalled anywhere else; but still they do not exhibit that obtuseness of the faculties which generally belongs to a condition of physical misery. The only races of people that are similar in their circumstances to the Boschmen are the natives of New Holland, and the Pecharas, a tribe inhabiting Patagonia.

The south-west coast of New Holland is nearly as badly supplied with water as the Karroo plains of Africa; and quadrupeds are so scarce there, that its inhabitants derive nearly their whole means of subsistence from the shores of the sea, to which they regularly resort at ebb-tide to collect the shell-fish that may have been left in the cavities of the rocks. Like the Boschmen, they are often forced to

eat insects and reptiles; and like them they wander from place to place in small parties, and form temporary huts of the twigs of bushes, and seek relief from the pains of hunger in torpidity and sleep. But here the parallel terminates; for the New Hollanders are too stupid and indolent to turn to the utmost account the few resources which Nature has placed within their reach; and so deficient are they in ingenuity, that they have not acquired even the art of fishing with nets or hooks, or learned the use of the bow and arrow. The Boschman, on the other hand, pertinaciously forces his unrelenting country to yield him all that it produces or contains; and the variety of inventions which he employs in the capture of game, and in carrying off cattle, equally proves his intelligence, and contributes to the supply of his wants. In physical strength, also, he surpasses the native of New Holland, whom Péron, the naturalist, found by experiment to be the weakest of the human race, and whom we are therefore justified in placing in the lowest grade of our species, whether we class him according to the qualities of his mind or of his body.

The tribe inhabiting the south coast of Patagonia, and named Pecharas by Cook, because

they frequently repeated that word, resemble in their physical condition the New Hollanders; but they exceed them in activity and animation, owing, it is probable, to the superior coldness of their climate. Wandering in small parties along the sterile and precipitous shores of the Straits of Magellan, they collect shell-fish for their subsistence during the day, and at night creep under the bushes, and obtain partial shelter by twining their branches overhead, and covering the arch thus formed with coarse grass. Severe as their climate is, many of them go nearly naked, and the others wear a scanty cloak made of the skins of wild beasts, and their only weapons are wooden clubs and stones. However, in giving the Boschman a higher rank in the scale of humanity than the New Hollander, or Pechara, I rest his pretensions to this entirely upon the superior address which he displays in struggling with the physical difficulties which environ him; for the *social* condition of the three races in question is equally low; the nature of their respective countries forming an insurmountable barrier to their living in communities, or in any way uniting for the purpose of security, convenience, or mutual improvement.

But let us turn from these distressing scenes

to the view of a happier and a more fortunate people, and the last of the aborigines of the colony that remains to be described. The Caffres, of whom I am now speaking, inhabit the coast of South Africa lying north-east of the Great Fish River, which was formerly the boundary of the colony in that direction: but it was not to be expected that the inviting country lying beyond it would long escape the encroachment of Europeans. The British Government soon found reasons for dispossessing the Caffres of a considerable part of it, and settlers are now annually flocking thither, while several fortified posts have been erected for their security, and to facilitate the acquisition of new territory whenever a convenient opportunity may occur.

A striking change in the aspect of the country takes place on the Caffre side of the Great Fish River. Instead of naked and sandy plains, scantily sprinkled with mimosæ, one sees an agreeable diversity of rounded hills and smooth and sweeping valleys, both thickly covered with brushwood, and most of the latter affording streams of transparent water. The atmosphere is soft and clear, the odour of vegetation pervades it, and the general scenery is free from that hardness of outline and abruptness of cha-

racter which almost universally belong to it in the neighbourhood of the peninsula of the Cape of Good Hope. The inhabitants of this fine region have few points of resemblance in common with the Hottentots or Boschmen. They infinitely surpass both in intelligence, bravery, personal appearance, and knowledge of the arts of life. They are bold without being ferocious; and are mild in their manners and of graceful address; and their mode of life presents all the simplicity of nature, without any of those barbarous or disgusting habits which are so apt to excite in a stranger prepossessions unfavourable to those who practise them.

The Caffres are a pastoral people; but they do not generally lead that nomade life which was universal amongst the Hottentots, and which the aridness of their country rendered necessary. On the contrary, they have fixed villages or kraals, composed of conical-shaped huts, formed of interwoven twigs, plastered with clay and thatched with straw. The site of these is usually upon an elevated spot, well sheltered by trees and brushwood; and in many instances so much so, that it is the smoke alone that enables the eye to discover that the place is inhabited. The Caffres possess abundance of

fine oxen and cows, and the milk of the latter forms a considerable part of their food: but they also eat the flesh of these animals and of sheep; and they cultivate maize and millet, and several kinds of vegetables. It is this uninterrupted abundance of all the necessaries of life, conjoined with the temperateness of their climate, that confer upon the Caffres a perfection of form which is probably not to be found amongst any other people. The personal beauty of the men strongly excited Barrow's admiration; and he says that those proportions which enchant us in the Grecian works of art, are of common occurence amongst the Caffres. I can vouch from personal observation, that he does not exaggerate here, having myself visited these people.

The Caffre style of beauty is of the most refined description, presenting that happy medium between muscular strength and slender effeminacy, which is best calculated to please the eye and satisfy the judgment. These people are of a bright copper colour, and clean in their persons, and the men go entirely naked; for the kross, or cloak of tanned hide, which they generally wear, hangs loosely from their shoulders, and scarcely touches their bodies, unless when they are seated or standing very

still. Their countenances have no physical peculiarity, and are generally symmetrical and pleasing in expression; their eyes being dark, their noses regular, and their teeth good. The women are the reverse of the men in every respect; their figures are clumsy, and their features coarse and even repulsive; and they go about wrapped in krosses which cover them from the shoulders down to the heels. Nevertheless, they love ornaments, and they carefully adorn their dresses with brass chains, plates of polished metal, beads, cowries, and similar articles.

The Caffre form of government is that of a chief whose dignity is hereditary, but his authority is very small, and he seldom exerts it except in the collection of tribute, which is generally paid in cattle. Lichtenstein says, that among the tribe called Koossas, the breast of every ox that is killed becomes a regal perquisite; and Burchell mentions the same custom as prevailing among the nation called Betchuanas, far in the interior of South Africa. We may suppose that this kind of tribute is in neither instance paid in reality, but commuted for something of a more convenient form. The Caffres never eat fish," though

these abound upon their coasts, and in most of the rivers which flow through their country; and it is not difficult to imagine why a pastoral people, enjoying all the necessaries of life, should neglect fishing, and avoid the trouble of making canoes and the dangers of navigating them.

It is scarcely necessary to say that crimes and acts of violence are rare amongst the Caffres. When an unenlightened people are neither enslaved nor oppressed, nor exposed to poverty or persecution, they seldom commit crimes either against society or individuals. They continue innocent and harmless, and well-disposed towards each other, till an intercourse with civilized man teaches them how to be discontented, by suggesting pleasures of difficult attainment, and awakening desires which cannot be fulfilled without injury to their fellow-beings. If any people can be considered universally happy, the inland Caffres are so; but it is to be feared that evil days will soon come upon them, as they have already done upon the frontier tribes. A weekly fair has been established at the post near the Great Fish River, called Fort Willshire, and the Caffres go there with cattle,

hides, horns, elephant's teeth, &c. and sell them to the colonists. The money which they obtain in this way is spent in purchasing ardent spirits, gaudy clothes, and contemptible trinkets, so that the traffic daily impoverishes them, instead of adding in the smallest degree to their happiness or comfort. Many of them acquire habits of drinking; others, occupied by new ideas, neglect their flocks, their only source of subsistence; and some, who have been ruined, begin to plunder their neighbours. Acts of violence, sanguinary quarrels, avarice, and jealousy, already begin to spread their ravages amongst them; and they owe all this, and will soon owe more than this, to the taste for European manufactures which has been diffused amongst them, and which many of our self-styled modern philanthropists, in the depth of their infatuation, consider as the first step towards civilized life.

No people that I have ever visited appear so free from evils, miseries, and inconveniences as the Caffres. In travelling through their country, nothing meets the eye that can cause a painful or disagreeable impression. Poverty and want are unknown there, and old age descends smilingly to the grave. The labours of

this people are so trifling that they do not deserve the name, and are regarded more in the light of amusements than anything else. To drive out the flocks in the morning, to collect them at sunset, to milk the cows at nightfall, and to hoe the ground for the reception of maize or millet, constitute the essential business of life amongst the Caffres. Exertions of the kind preserve the health and render buoyant the spirits; and the Caffres, in accordance with this, are full of vivacity and fond of exercise. They are continually seen bounding among the thickets that embower their dwellings, or strolling in parties and talking and laughing. In short, they are in that condition of life in which man has always been found most happy and most virtuous; and the evidently approaching extinction of such a people is to be viewed with regret.

I am aware that many persons will ask if the extermination of savages, of barbarians, is at any time to be regretted, and, least of all, when their place is to be supplied by Europeans and civilized beings? and as this objection may appear plausible, it will be well to submit it to examination: and, in the first place, it is proper to remark, that when we

talk of peopling a country with civilized beings, it is always taken for granted by the mass of society, that persons of education and refinement are to be transported there at once, and that the wilderness or desert is suddenly to become the abode of a virtuous and intelligent community, and the seat of arts, elegancies, and domestic enjoyment. In short, agriculture is to flourish, education to be promoted, science encouraged, roads made, public buildings erected, and all the advantages of social life developed and brought to maturity. These are dreams produced by ignorance and delusion. In every instance, the emigrants who first flock to a new country are inferior to its aborigines in virtue, intelligence, usefulness, and respectability.

The dregs of the population of large towns; a peasantry rendered desperate by the pressure of hopeless poverty; debauchees and spendthrifts destitute of friends and credit; such are the materials which form the foundation of the anticipated superstructure of civilized life; such are the beings who are let loose to play pranks in the wilderness, and commit ravages upon its simple, unsuspicious, and uncorrupted inhabitants. These Europeans, it is true, carry with

them the knowledge of a religion which is calculated to correct their evil propensities; but unfortunately, at all times, the image of a gibbet, or gaol, or of a house of correction, has more effect in restraining their inclination for vice and injustice, than the precepts of morality, however obvious and sublime these may be. Transported into a new land, freed from the terror of laws and police, and independent of their superiors, they rush into all kinds of excesses, and feel a particular delight in frightening, oppressing, and enslaving the aborigines of the country. These, if they attempt to assert their rights, are maltreated and massacred as insulting and dangerous barbarians; and if they quietly submit to the tyranny of their invaders, they are counted as beasts destitute of spirit and unworthy of mercy or commiseration.

The emigrants, though divided by national prejudices, and jealous of each other's prosperity, will at least form a league against the natives; while, at the same time, the introduction of drunkenness, small-pox, and other contagious diseases, will rapidly thin their numbers, and lead to their final and early extinction. Such is in general the early history of European settlements in foreign countries.

Details of this kind are seldom found in writing; for it is not to be expected that the actors in such atrocities will try to preserve the memory of them, even supposing that there should exist an individual amongst them who is capable of guiding a pen or reading his native language.

There is no doubt whatever that Caffraria has had European inhabitants in different parts of the coast long before the present time. Till within fifteen or twenty years ago, the coast in the neighbourhood of the Great Fish River was laid down in all charts nearly a degree too far to the westward; and this was the cause of numerous shipwrecks, the greater part of which probably have never come to our knowledge.

In 1782, the Grosvenor Indiaman was wrecked upon the coast of Caffraria, and a Dutchman named Vanreenen went in search of the supposed survivors of her crew and passengers. He found many persons evidently of European descent in various places, and likewise a large village containing about four hundred mulatto or bastard Caffres, called Hamboanas; amongst whom were three white women, who said that they had been shipwrecked upon the coast when they were children, and that they recollected

none of the particulars of their misfortune. This shows that Europeans must have been thrown into the country many years anterior to the loss of the Grosvenor, though when and in what way cannot now be ascertained. Here are two remarkable circumstances that deserve notice.

It is well known that a large number of the crew and passengers of that vessel got safely on shore, but Vanreenen failed in discovering any of the party, or even learning anything satisfactory concerning them, though he visited the spot only nine years after the shipwreck. Why did not the Hamboanas in the neighbourhood protect and assist the white men, whom they must have regarded as relations and friends, if it be true that on seeing Vanreenen and his party, they cried out, "Our fathers are come!" It is not probable that the Caffres wantonly destroyed them, for they are not a sanguinary race; and being accustomed too to the sight of white people and their descendants, and being in peace with these, we may suppose that they would have given a favourable reception to others of the same race. Neither was any article of European origin found in the country by Vanreenen, nor the smallest circumstance or object that could point out what had been

the fate of the shipwrecked persons. It ought to be recollected, that Vanreenen, on first meeting the white women above mentioned, offered to carry them and their families to the Cape, and that they received the proposal with joy. After this he proceeded a little way farther along the coast till he came to the place of the shipwreck, where he found several guns and a quantity of iron ballast; then returning by the same route, he again visited the females, under the impression that they would be ready to proceed with him to the colony; but they declined his offers, and told him that they must first gather in the harvest, &c.; an excuse so frivolous, and so inconsistent with their former declarations, that it is impossible to doubt that it was invented by themselves to conceal their unwillingness to accompany him; when they had on a former occasion expressed their anxiety to do so, they were unacquainted with the object of his journey; but having ascertained this during his absence, they were led to change their intentions for reasons best known to themselves.

These circumstances taken in connexion, render it probable that all the people of the Grosvenor, except those who reached Cape Town, were

put to death by the Caffres and Hamboanas. Perhaps these people, finding that the seamen stole their provisions, insulted their women, and attempted to make themselves masters of everything, and that they were not likely soon or easily to find the means of quitting the country, considered it a measure of prudence and necessity to destroy the whole party, in order to get rid of their oppressors at once, and to prevent any one conveying intelligence of the affair to the neighbouring colonists. It would be their general interest that the transaction should be kept secret; and when it was known that Vanreenen and his companions had arrived in search of the shipwrecked people, every article that had belonged to them would be concealed, and the white women prohibited from accompanying him to the colony, or giving him any information relative to the object of his journey. There is no other way than the above of explaining how upwards of a hundred individuals, thrown upon a fertile and healthy coast, should all have perished in less than nine years, and that too without leaving behind them any memorial or vestige of their ever having existed.

The Hottentots, the Boschmen, and the Caffres are the only aboriginal inhabitants of the

colony. None of the other neighbouring nations being within its limits, a description of them does not belong to the plan of this work. With respect to South Africa in general, it appears that the condition of the people and the character of the country improve as we advance towards the equator. The town of Lattakoo, containing about five thousand persons, is found in latitude 26° 30′; and its inhabitants describe many great and powerful nations as existing to the northward of them, some of whom it would appear possess the art of refining and working metals. The vast country extending between the tropic of Capricorn and the equator is wholly unknown and unexplored, and is likely long to continue so; the difficulty of an expedition of the kind being almost insurmountable; for the nearest point from which the travellers could start is Cape Town, and when they had reached the quarter from whence their researches were to commence, their cattle would be worn out, their waggons injured, and their stores consumed, by the fatigues and duration of the previous journey.

This inconvenience would be diminished were it practicable to convey the exploring party and their supplies in a vessel from Table Bay up the

Orange River, from the banks of which they might begin their travels; but that stream, it would appear, is not navigable even for boats; and its mouth is so obstructed by a bar and by sand-banks, as to render the entrance both difficult and dangerous.

It now remains for me to speak of the various attempts which missionaries have made to form establishments in South Africa, and to improve the condition of its aborigines. Were we to judge of this matter by the discussion which it has occasioned, and by the sums of money that have been spent in forwarding it, and by the statements that are circulated relative to the subject, we would suppose that a vast deal of good has been accomplished, and that much more is to be expected; but if we form our opinion from actual observation, and take into view the physical peculiarities of South Africa, we will decide that the missionaries have actually effected nothing there, and that a perseverance in their labours is more likely to injure than to benefit the objects of these.

This remark is not intended to refer in the remotest degree to the conduct and qualifications of the missionaries, many of whom are distinguished for the greatest zeal and disinter-

estedness in labouring to accomplish the hopeless task that has been allotted to them. They have been sent to South Africa by the societies to which they respectively belong, and it is not their business to accuse their superiors of ignorance and want of judgment, or to express a desire to be removed to another and more promising sphere of action.

It seems obvious, that the first step towards forming a missionary establishment, should be to obtain an accurate geographical knowledge of the country in which it is proposed to place it. Such, at least, was the opinion of the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and of other societies who have been successful in assembling together uncivilized men, and giving them a taste for the arts and conveniences of social life. But the British Missionary Societies never consider geographical information to be of the smallest importance; and the evils of this erroneous impression are strongly exemplified in the attempts which they have made, and are making, to found establishments in South Africa.

Enough has already been said to satisfy the reader that the bane of South Africa, and the cause of its sterility, is want of water; and that consequently its population must always be

scanty and very widely diffused. Even in the best and most fertile districts of the colony, with a few exceptions, the springs and rivulets are generally ten or twelve miles apart, and perhaps throughout the year they do not respectively afford more water than is sufficient for a single family possessing the usual number of cattle, putting irrigation on the smallest scale out of the question. Yet it is in a country of this kind that the missionaries are instructed to form establishments, and to collect people into villages, which they have partially effected in a few instances, but in every case without improving the condition of those who have joined their institutions. And supposing the settlement to be situated upon the banks of a never-failing stream, one or two of which do exist in the colony, how are its inhabitants to obtain the means of subsistence? Only three ways present themselves: viz. the rearing of cattle — or the practice of agriculture — or the introduction of manufactories. The first is impossible, on account of the want of pasturage for any considerable number of animals in one neighbourhood, and the fatal diseases to which they are liable under such circumstances.

On the other hand, the people could not live

by cultivating the soil, because it is everywhere unproductive and of difficult tillage; nor could it be improved by irrigation, all the rivers in South Africa flowing in deep and rocky channels, from which the water could be raised only by the aid of expensive and complicated machinery. The last resource of the community is, that they should engage in manufactures, and obtain the necessaries of life in exchange for these. But in a country where the proportion of the inhabitants does not exceed two individuals to every square mile; where the poorer classes clothe themselves in skins; where the better sort make at home almost every article that they require; and where there is no chance of an increase of population, how could the manufacturers dispose of their commodities? And supposing them to be of a disposable character, would they equal in cheapness and excellence those of a similar kind imported from Europe? I am aware that the celebrated Moravian institution, called Gnatendal, may be brought forward to prove the weakness of my arguments and observations; and I will therefore enter into a few details concerning the place, which I have myself visited.

In the neighbourhood of Gnatendal the country is horrid and barren beyond description.

Not a tree or shrub meets the eye, and not an insect is heard to hum; and animated beings of every kind seem to fly the frightful solitude, where a painful and unbroken silence almost always prevails. In approaching the place from the Cape side, the settlement, which lies in a valley, is entirely concealed from the eye till one reaches the summit of a hill immediately overlooking it. He then sees beneath him a basin, formed by barren hills, and about a mile and a half long, and nearly half as broad, the bottom of which, sprinkled with cottages and embroidered with gardens, presents a scene of rustic animation calculated to delight the beholder under any circumstances, but more particularly when he unexpectedly finds it, as it were, embedded in the middle of a desert.

The village of Gnatendal is about one mile long and half a mile broad. The houses, which are not placed with any regularity, resemble British cottages in their internal arrangement, most of them consisting of a narrow passage running across the building, and a room on each side. The walls are generally composed of unbaked bricks, coated outside with clay of a brown colour, which is sometimes whitewashed. Some of the houses have glass windows, and all of them are neat and clean in their ex-

terior, and one does not see any remains of slaughtered animals lying about as is common in Hottentot kraals. The paths leading from one part of the village to another are shaded with trees and enclosed by hedges, which, combined with other particulars, gives the place an air of taste and embellishment which one may often look for in vain in the villages of civilized Europe. The church and missionary houses are built in a style of appropriate simplicity, and the tall and flourishing oak-trees in front of them render their aspect very attractive; and the whole settlement is invested with a character of serenity, calmness, seclusion, and repose, such as belongs to few other inhabited spots with which I am acquainted.

Gnatendal contains thirteen hundred souls. Few of these are genuine Hottentots; and the mass of the population consists of half-breeds or bastards of various kinds, and some Mozambique negroes, who have purchased their freedom. The Moravian missionaries never invite any one to settle in Gnatendal; on the contrary, they say, that they are troubled with daily applications to that effect; and no one is admitted as a resident, except with the consent of a certain number of Hottentot censors,

chosen by the Hottentots themselves to decide upon that and similar affairs. These censors represent the people, as it were, and are elected by vote. All kinds of trades, such as those of shoemaker, tailor, waggonmaker, blacksmith, cutler, &c. are carried on in the village.

The Hottentots are considered to have an excellent capacity, which enables them to learn anything; and their children possess greater quickness and acuteness than those of Europeans, and soon excel in many of the mechanical arts. The women have a natural aptness for music, and there is certainly considerable sweetness in their voices; though the singing in Gnatendal church is far from being so finished and enchanting a performance as Latrobe's description would lead his readers to suppose. All the villagers are neat and respectable in their dress. The men wear buckskin pantaloons, and cloth or linen jackets; and the women skirts of calico, and white boddices of cotton and other stuffs. Every house in the settlement has a garden attached to it, and most of these are in a state of high cultivation, and produce many of the commoner sorts of vegetables; but this is less owing to the goodness of the soil than to the constant supply

of water which Gnatendal enjoys, and which enables the residents to irrigate their grounds several times a-week.

There is no cultivation within many miles of Gnatendal, and the pasture in its neighbourhood is scanty and miserable, even during the rainy season; and the inhabitants at all times require to drive the few cattle that they do possess to a great distance to obtain forage. The settlement appears on first view a monstrosity in the wilderness, and the traveller immediately asks how its population subsist? A reply to this question will show that the same objections apply to Gnatendal as to all other institutions of the kind in South Africa. At the beginning of summer, half of the inhabitants desert the village and wander about the country in search of work; and when the harvest is done, they return home with the little money that they may have earned, and contrive to exist upon it and the produce of their gardens till the ensuing season. Those who remain in the village all the year through are chiefly tradesmen. They are supported by the sale of their handiwork, for which there is a considerable demand; because the country lying thirty or forty miles beyond Gnatendal

on every side is very populous, and its boors obtain cutlery, farming utensils, and even waggons, from the Hottentots of the institution, instead of sending for them to Cape Town.

Many strangers, too, visit the spot from curiosity, nearly all of whom purchase some specimens of Hottentot manufactures, thus causing an influx of money, of the highest importance to the community. And it is to be supposed that the missionaries generally assist the destitute part of their flock, and in this way retain many individuals in the village who would otherwise be forced to leave it on account of poverty and want of employment. Hence it appears, that the settlement at Gnatendal is entirely and exclusively supported by extraneous means, and that its inhabitants cannot derive any certain subsistence, either from agriculture or grazing, or from the natural productions of the neighbouring soil. Were any of these resources available, the missionaries would doubtless have recourse to them, and improve alike the condition and the morals of the Hottentots, by fixing them in their village, and rendering them independent of foreign aid and intercourse.

The Jesuits of Paraguay would not allow a

stranger visiting their missionary stations to remain more than two days and two nights at any one of them, lest, as they said, he should corrupt the neophytes and teach them European vices: an admirable regulation, which unfortunately cannot be adopted at Gnatendal, where an influx of travellers and visitors to purchase its manufactures is encouraged, as essential to the prosperity and even existence of the institution.

I have thus proved all that I proposed to do, viz. that the state of Gnatendal does not controvert my assertion, that no missionary settlement in South Africa can ever be made to derive its subsistence from the soil, or afford within itself the resources necessary for its stability and success. And none of these can imitate Gnatendal, no other part of the country being populous enough to give temporary employment to hundreds of nomade labourers, or to consume the manufactures that might be produced by the part of the community who remained at home.

The above remarks will enable the reader to form a judgment of the state of the missions far in the interior of the colony, where the soil is infinitely less productive and more arid than in

the neighbourhood of the sea-coast. But even the Bethelsdorp institution, near Algoa Bay, feels all the evils of drought and sterility; and it was selected by Vanderkemp, so far back as 1798, as the most eligible spot for the purpose that the surrounding country afforded. Mr. Campbell, who visited this settlement in 1813, in his character of superintendent of missions, thus describes it:—"The ground on which it stands is barren in the extreme, so that nothing green is to be seen near the houses; this also adds to the gloominess of the village. Neither trees nor gardens are to be seen to relieve the eye; but all this arises from *the total want of good water* on the ground, except in the barren spot where the village stands. In consequence of the miserable appearance of the village, the settlers are reported by many people to be extremely indolent."

Lichtenstein gives a still more gloomy picture of Bethelsdorp in 1804, and states that its inhabitants were in rags and misery, and that the site of the place was hideous and barren to the last degree: but I have preferred quoting Campbell, as the former author was thought to be unfavourably disposed towards the mission, and inclined to show it in the worst possible

light. Mr. Campbell proposed that every house in Bethelsdorp should have a garden behind it, in imitation of Gnatendal. The reply was, "The people are discouraged from doing so, by the *barrenness of the ground* where the village stands, *the want of water*, the depredation of goats, &c." The following other questions and answers, selected from a variety which he proposed to the missionaries, will give a better idea of the settlement than any description would do:— "Could not the small river which runs across Bethelsdorp be conducted so as to water these gardens?" — "*The river is often dry*, and likewise it cannot be conveyed to ground so high as that on which the village stands." — "Could not the village be built on Zwartkop's River?" — "*No, the water is brackish*, and unfit for use." — "Could not more trees be planted about the village?" — "The ground is so *rocky and dry that they will not grow*." Mr. Campbell informs us that the number of individuals belonging to the institution in 1813 was 1052, of which only 608 were present. The remainder were most likely wandering about the country in search of those means of subsistence which were unattainable at home, in the same way as has been described as annually occurring amongst the inhabitants of Gnatendal.

The physical state of the missions in the interior is extremely wretched, as the following extracts from Campbell's journal, while he was at Pella, near the Orange River, will show: —

"A more barren-looking spot can hardly be conceived than Pella, *all around being white sand,* interspersed with a few bushes; two sides of which space, the north and east, are bounded by high rugged and black mountains. We visited their gardens in the afternoon, the sight of which cast a gloom on every countenance. It was the second month of their spring; many things had been sown, but most had perished, in consequence of the saltpetre with which the ground was impregnated, as soon as they had raised their heads above ground; others seemed struggling to live. I do not recollect a single smile on any countenance while viewing the garden. The water is the only temptation they have to remain at Pella. The banks of the Great River, which are only about four miles distant, are so *covered with rocks,* that they cannot live upon them. Thermometer at noon 84°."

"We had still uninterrupted sunshine; but though cheering to look upward, it was gloomy to look downward, for everything had a *sickly, dying* aspect." — "They (the Namaqua Hottentots) come at different times of the day to the

door of the missionaries; and when they salute them with good morning, it is the same as telling them they have *nothing to eat that day.*"

Thompson, in one of his excursions in South Africa in 1824, visited this same Pella, and found it entirely deserted, the missionary and forty of his flock having removed to a spot twenty miles distant, in consequence of the failure of pasture at the station; while the remaining four-fifths of its former inhabitants were wandering about the neighbouring country with their cattle, in search of grass and water.

Can any individual of sound judgment view with complacency and satisfaction the efforts made to assemble communities of people in situations such as those above described? where life must be a scene of continued privation and misery — where no species of knowledge can enable them to ameliorate their condition — where Nature wars against every effort of the kind — and where they must be the happier and more contented the deeper they are sunk in barbarism and ignorance. The interior of South Africa is a country which will afford means of subsistence more or less scanty to its population as long as they continue nomade and dispersed;

but if they are collected together into large societies, poverty, famine, and death must inevitably be the result. The poorest and most miserable of the Hottentots are often those who have long resided at missionary establishments. They are induced to join these by the hope of bettering their condition. Bringing with them their cattle, should they happen to possess any, they settle at a station such as Pella, under the idea that they will there be able to earn a livelihood by the labour of their hands; but finding this to be a delusion, they are obliged to kill their flocks for their support, and when these are consumed, they find it necessary to desert their homes, and travel through the colony till they are assisted by some one, or taken into the service of the boors. But even those who are not driven from the institution by poverty do not abandon a nomade life, as is too commonly supposed.

I have already shown that in general one half of the population of the missionary establishments is absent, from various causes, for a great part of the year, on which occasions they probably forget a vast deal of what has been taught them — that is to say, if they really have learned anything at all. At Gnatendal, Green Kloof,

and Bethelsdorp, and a few other stations, where the inhabitants speak Dutch, they are, I have no doubt, tolerably well instructed in religion; but in Namaqualand and the Boschman country, the people understand no language but their native one; and the missionaries must address them through interpreters, and of course find great difficulty in instructing their hearers; and even when any missionary does acquire the native language of his congregation, it proves of little use to him, from its not containing words calculated to express the ideas and opinions which it is his object to inculcate.

The missionaries of South Africa, doubtless, feel severely the disadvantages of their situation, the hopelessness of the labours imposed upon them, and the many hardships to which they are exposed; but they are too good men to wish to abandon their posts, and too zealous in the cause of religion and civilization to be discouraged by the physical and moral difficulties which surround them. I am aware that many persons who contribute largely to the support of missionary associations will condemn my opinions on this subject, considering it a matter of indifference how poor, destitute, and miserable the Christian converts may be, pro-

vided they are able to crawl to church two or three times a week, and to repeat a few psalms and prayers: but unfortunately the Hottentots and Boschmen have little taste for a system of spirituality; and the sight of cultivated lands and of abundance of cattle would do more in alluring them to adopt a settled mode of life, than super-human eloquence, or even the performance of miracles, on the part of their instructors.

# EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THE Dutch took possession of the Cape of Good Hope by the same authority that has served other European nations in similar cases, viz. the power and the inclination to form a settlement. However, there are two points in the proceedings of the Hollanders which we cannot but admire. They neither asked the Pope to give them South Africa, nor did they assure its natives that their sole object in coming amongst them was to instruct them in the Christian religion.

According to Kolbe, whose work contains the earliest details which we possess respecting the colony, the governor, Van Rebeck, purchased the country of the Hottentots for forty thousand florins; but the truth of this has been doubted; nor is it likely that the Dutch gave

any price for a territory which they could have taken by force, which presented few attractions or objects of wealth, and which they must at that time have proposed to occupy only by way of experiment. However this may be, the views of the Dutch government were at first very moderate in reference to the Cape of Good Hope; for they built only a small mud-fort at the confluence of the Salt River with Table Bay, and for many years the settlement and the cultivated grounds did not extend farther back than the bottom of Table Mountain. After a time, the advantageousness of the colony being represented to the home government, emigrants were allured thither by donations of land; while, to equalize the population, and to prevent intermixture with the Hottentots, a number of girls, taken out of the charity-schools in Holland, were conveyed to the Cape at the public expense, to serve as wives for those who might want them.

No accurate information can be obtained respecting the habits, mode of life, and character of the first settlers at the Cape of Good Hope; nor are these objects of much interest or importance, as all infant communities are too constantly engaged in providing for their absolute

wants, to have time or disposition to unfold any peculiarities of character. From the frequent change of governors that took place in the course of the first hundred years after the establishment of the colony, we may suppose that many of them were removed from office on account of their corrupt practices. Kolbe, who wrote in the year 1713, enters into various details of this kind, particularly in reference to Adrian Vanderstel, who was governor in 1699. He accuses him of having monopolized the fisheries at the Cape, and of having appropriated to himself thirty leagues of territory upon its eastern coast, and built splendid residences in various districts out of the colonial funds, one of which he was ordered to pull down at his own expense previous to his recall and dismissal from office. The inferior agents in the employ of the Dutch Company, having such an example before them, were of course led to abuse the trusts reposed in them; which they had an opportunity of doing when trafficking with the Hottentots for cattle for the public service, or when furnishing supplies to the ships in Table Bay. And it would appear that all the officers of the colony, of whatever grade, connived at each other's malpractices, and en-

deavoured to improve their fortunes at the expense of the Dutch India Company, and by extortions upon the natives.

It is probable that Simon Vanderstel, the predecessor of the corrupt governor of that name, above alluded to, and who came to the colony in 1679, was the person who first communicated a spirit of improvement to its inhabitants, and diffused amongst them a taste for the arts of social life. He was a man of lively imagination, and of a vigorous and enterprising mind, which led him to plan and execute various undertakings, which never had occurred to his predecessors in office. He proposed to open a canal of communication between Table Bay and False Bay, of a sufficient size to admit the passage of the largest vessels from the one to the other; so that during north-west gales the shipping might run for shelter into the latter port, and during south-east ones resort to the former. He also made a journey into Namaqualand, beyond the Orange River, and explored many parts of the colony that had never before been visited by Europeans, or were at least very imperfectly known to them. He built an elegant country residence ten miles from Cape Town, and called it Constantia, in honour of his

wife; and it is this farm which now produces the celebrated wine of the same name. Here it would appear that Vanderstel spent much of his time, and frequently entertained his friends. Kolbe, who sometimes enjoyed his hospitality, complains of his propensity for exaggeration and his love of the marvellous; and says, that he once assured him, that in the course of his travels in the colony, he had ascended certain mountains of so great a height, that he could see the grass moving on the surface of the moon, and hear it rustling in the wind.

Vanderstel had the merit of encouraging the culture of the grape in the colony, but none of the settlers there have to this day been able to make wine equal to that of Constantia. This favoured territory is of so small extent, and its soil so much resembles that of the neighbouring grounds, that the superior quality of the grapes raised upon it has always been a subject of mystery and astonishment. But Stavorinus, the Dutch voyager, pretends to explain the difficulty; for he says that the soil at the Cape of Good Hope is badly adapted for the cultivation of the grape, on account of its being everywhere impregnated with salt; and that Governor Vanderstel, aware of this, caused a

basket of earth to be taken up at the distance of every hundred roods, throughout a considerable extent of country in the neighbourhood of Table Bay. He then separately mixed with water these specimens of the soil, in order to dissolve the saline particles contained in them, and by evaporating the respective solutions, he easily ascertained what spot of ground was least brackish. This proved to be the site of Constantia; and he accordingly selected it for a vineyard and a country residence.

We possess no details relative to the state of European society at the Cape of Good Hope that are worth recording till the year 1771, when Governor Tulbagh had long presided over the colony, and was revered and beloved, alike by the inhabitants of Cape Town and by the foreigners who happened to visit it. Unlike many of his predecessors, he was a man of the most scrupulous integrity in public and private life; and the moderateness of his establishment, and his indifference to external pomp and ceremonies, combined with a diligent attention to business, and an accessibleness to all persons however humble, showed that he viewed his official situation less as a means of promoting his own pleasure and benefit, than as an instrument

to advance the happiness and prosperity of the people under his administration. Those sums which he might have spent in public entertainments, he employed in relieving the indigent; his greatest happiness consisted in doing justice and exercising benevolence; and the influence which he possessed as the head of the government, was constantly exerted in promoting union and harmony amongst those over whom he presided;—a task of equal difficulty and importance in all colonial societies, whether large or small.

It is difficult to believe that the people who witnessed so many virtues, and experienced their effects for so long a time, did not reflect some of them in a faint degree, or at least hold in respect qualities which they were themselves incapable of imitating. But the picture which Stavorinus has drawn of the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope about the year 1770, would lead us to form an opposite conclusion. "The chief trait in their character," says he, "which appears the most evident to a stranger after a little reflection, is the love of money; and this is so palpable and universal amongst them, both in men and women, that one must be more than prejudiced in their favour to attempt to

deny it. Flattering words, insinuating caresses, the allurements of friendship, love, and hospitality, nought is omitted or neglected that can contribute to gain the hearts and ensure the confidence of the wandering strangers who touch at the Cape: this appears to me the probable reason why most people who have been there once or twice, and have without reflection taken the base metal of self-interest for the sterling gold of refined courtesy and friendship, are so profuse in their encomiums on the Cape, as if it were the most agreeable abode upon earth, and the centre of every satisfaction. But view the other side of the picture, and examine into the principles and motives which give rise to the abundance of allurements, and the promotion of self-interest will appear to be the mainspring that excites this exercise of seeming hospitality."

Stavorinus proceeds to tell us that the inhabitants of Cape Town are universally envious of each other's prosperity; and that the men are ignorant, disinclined for reading or the acquirement of any kind of knowledge, and that they have not courage to go abroad to better their fortunes, or to enter into the military or naval services. I should not have given this writer's

opinions so much at large, had not he been a Dutchman; but as he professes to describe his own countrymen and their descendants, his testimony must be of considerable importance in enabling us to judge of the state of society at the Cape of Good Hope towards the end of the last century.

It ought to be recollected, that the Dutch East India Company adopted the same pernicious system in the payment of their officers at the Cape of Good Hope, as they did in their other foreign settlements. The salaries were contemptibly small, and scarcely sufficient to purchase the necessaries of life; but those receiving them were tacitly permitted to increase their incomes by private trade and other indirect sources of emolument. "Thus," says Thunberg, the Swedish traveller, "while the governor makes ten rixdollars of every pipe of wine that is sold in the colony, other officers find their advantage in giving leave of absence to people who receive pay from the company without doing any service for it. Some make their fortunes by false weights; others by damaged goods. A shipwreck fills the pockets of many. In consequence of the rapacity of their captains and their mates, the sailors seldom get

their due. The soldiers must yield something to their officers. The sick must starve for the support of many that are in health, and the defunct must leave part of their effects to the first comer."

Every one naturally struggled to obtain the greatest possible share in these contingencies, and a spirit of rivalry, distrust, and dissimulation arose from this continual collision of interests; and when any one gained an advantage, he became an object of envy to his neighbours, because they had not participated in it, or been able to appropriate it exclusively to themselves. Private trade, and the perquisites of office, proved however, in many cases, insufficient for the support of married people with large families, and they accordingly opened boarding-houses for the reception of strangers visiting the Cape, and their efforts to obtain inmates formed an additional source of jealousy and mutual dislike. The society was thus kept in a state of division by that attention to self-interest which Stavorinus considered the mainspring of Dutch character in Cape Town; but which, being in reality essential to the prosperity and even subsistence of most of its inhabitants, was much less reprehensible

than he would make it out to be; though it is impossible to deny that a stranger like himself could have little pleasure in associating with people who were too much absorbed in their own petty concerns to find time to think or talk of anything else.

It might reasonably be supposed that the daily intercourse with foreigners, which the inhabitants of Cape Town enjoyed, would have polished their manners and extended their ideas; particularly as almost every person that visited the place became an inmate of some private boarding-house, and was treated as one of the domestic circle while he remained there. But few of these strangers were calculated to refine or improve the individuals with whom they might come into contact. Masters and supercargoes of ships, and mercantile agents from different countries, composed the majority of the voyagers that touched at the Cape. And if now and then a governor, or a director, or a senior merchant, in the service of the Dutch India Company, landed there in his way to or from the Eastern islands, his regard for state and etiquette would prevent his associating with its inhabitants. Sparmann describes the society which he met in

the house of the colonial resident at False Bay in 1772, as being of a most singular and motley description. It consisted of the officers and passengers of Dutch, French, and British ships, and of a number of English ladies, married and unmarried, on their way to different parts of India, either to join their husbands there, or to procure an object of the kind. Four or five European languages were spoken at table; and after dinner, when the desert was brought in, the Dutch shipmasters unanimously put on their hats, and smoked their pipes, while the rest of the company partook of the fruits placed before them.

An influx of strangers of this description could have no very favourable influence upon any society whatever; and we find from the remarks made by subsequent travellers, that little change had taken place in the manners and mode of life of the inhabitants of Cape Town for many years after. Raynal, however, who wrote about this period, represents the settlement as one of the most favoured in the world, and tells us, that the sole business of the females there was to educate their children and promote the happiness of their husbands; and that so great was the simplicity and purity of senti-

ment existing amongst them, that when a girl happened to conceive an attachment for a young man, she boldly avowed it, and was applauded for so doing, and seldom failed by her sincerity to secure the affections of the object of her choice, and to crown her wishes by marriage.

The arrival of two French regiments at the Cape, in 1784, caused a considerable, though temporary, change in the habits and mode of life of the Dutch. The officers and their wives introduced a taste for Parisian fashions; and the females of Cape Town, no longer satisfied with the simple costumes which had formerly prevailed amongst them, were seized with a rage for expensive and fantastic dresses. Ostrich feathers for plumes were particularly in request; and Le Vaillant, who had collected a large quantity of these in the course of his first journey in the interior of the colony, with a view of sending them to Europe, found it necessary to part with the whole for the satisfaction of his fair friends. The French officers likewise established a theatre, and the amateur performances that often took place there delighted the society beyond expression; and infused a taste for gaiety and dissipation into its gravest members. This state of things continued till two of the princi-

pal actors attempted to counterfeit the paper money at that time current in the colony. They were quickly detected, and narrowly escaped being hung; and their coadjutors, ashamed of so disgraceful a transaction, discontinued their performances; while, on the other hand, the Dutch, rendered suspicious of the moral character of their gay visiters, became less intimate with them, and the society gradually resumed its former tranquillity.

The inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope had, from the first establishment of the colony in 1652, enjoyed profound peace and personal security, and had neither been disturbed by fears of foreign invasion, nor agitated by internal commotions, nor by the inflammatory doctrines of restless reformers. Though the trade and population of the country had gradually and even rapidly increased, the manners and ideas of its inhabitants had undergone no change; and if an abundance of the necessaries of life, a fair portion of political liberty, moderate desires, and a contentedness with their condition, are calculated to render any people happy, the colonists in South Africa were certainly so. They had indeed a few grievances and causes of complaint, arising chiefly from the rapacity and in-

justice of some of their governors, and from the restrictions that were from time to time imposed upon their trade by the impolitic enactments of the mother country; and it has even been asserted, that on these grounds they were thoroughly disposed for rebellion about the end of the last century, and would have declared themselves independent, had not they been checked in their designs by the invasion of the English in 1795. However this may be, the trifling resistance which was made to the landing of the British troops, and to their subsequent investment and occupation of Cape Town, seems to indicate that the Dutch, if not actually disposed to receive foreign conquerors, were at least indifferent about continuing any longer under the protection of Holland.

The occupation of the colony by the British forms the most important era in its political and domestic history; for never before had any European settlement so long escaped foreign invasion and the evils of war, and consequently the effects of both were the more strongly felt by those who were thus suddenly subjected to them. Although the English local government redressed several grievances of which the colonists had long been complaining, and reduced

the amount of their taxes, they nevertheless utterly disliked their invaders, whose mode of life, habits, and ideas bore little similarity to their own; and they would willingly have sacrificed part of their liberty and properties to be relieved from their domination. Nor are the causes of this feeling difficult to explain. Soon after the British had taken possession of the Cape of Good Hope, they made various changes in the local government; many individuals were removed from office — others had their salaries and perquisites reduced — not a few found their personal consequence diminished — some had their hopes of advancement suddenly destroyed — and, in short, the views and interests of every individual in Cape Town were more or less affected by the new arrangements brought about by their foreign masters. Besides all this, most of the principal Dutch families being connected by ties of relationship or long acquaintance, every one naturally took up the cause of another, and a spirit of discontent and irritation was thus diffused through the whole community, and imbibed by individuals who had little or no grounds for the indulgence of either. Every one had something to say in reproach of the English government, and the minor dissensions

previously so common in Cape society were all forgotten amidst the new circumstances under which its members found themselves placed.

But these grounds of dislike to the British occupants of Cape Town might have been got over, had not they been fomented and increased by the conduct of the conquerors to the conquered. Unhappily the British do not possess the art of conciliating those people whom they bring under their subjection; because, considering themselves superior as a nation and as individuals to all other inhabitants of the earth, they never have any intercourse with foreigners without allowing them to perceive how thoroughly they despise them. Wherever they observe manners or modes of thinking different from their own, they pronounce sentence of condemnation against those who have adopted them; and, wrapped in a supercilious self-complacency, weigh and measure their fellow-creatures by an imaginary standard, and undervalue them in proportion as they fall short of it. Even when the British add to the prosperity of a colony, as they did at the Cape of Good Hope, the benefits which they confer are neutralized by the deportment of those from whom they emanate. The exercise of justice and integrity, and of all the

higher virtues, by a conquering people towards the conquered, seldom so well compensate the latter for the pain of foreign domination, as conciliating manners, a concealment of prejudices, and a disposition for intercourse and sociality. I will not farther enlarge upon this subject here, as in treating of other colonies I shall but too often have occasion to revert to it, and to bring forward instances in illustration of the above remarks.

The principal writers who describe the colony at this period are Barrow and Lichtenstein; and great as their respective merits and powers of observation are, they always stand at variance when the subject in question has any relation to Dutch character and Dutch society. Lichtenstein is a man of science, and a judicious and enlightened observer; but, unfortunately, while writing his work, that of Barrow has too often presented itself to his thoughts, and he has exerted himself to contradict it as often as possible, and to prove the incorrectness of its statements, which makes the relation of his travels assume the character of an eulogy upon the colony, and a defence of the Dutch, instead of being an unbiassed narration of what he saw in South Africa.

At the time that Barrow made his observations, the colonists were in a state of political ferment and dissension, and Dutch society appeared to great disadvantage. Nor was he likely to be well received under the official character which he bore, while it at the same time necessarily introduced him to a knowledge of persons, scenes, and occurrences little calculated to excite favourable impressions, or to soothe the fatigues of travelling peculiar to the country. But he might, nevertheless, have been a little more indulgent in his views of the colonial society, and have considered that the inhabitants of Cape Town had never enjoyed an opportunity of acquiring a taste for that knowledge, education, and mental refinement, which he professes to have in vain sought for amongst them.

The account of the present state of European society at the Cape of Good Hope, which I am now about to enter into, is almost entirely the result of personal observation; and if it differs in some respects from what has been given by preceding writers, this may be partly referred to the changes which a series of years has operated in the colony, and partly to my desire to do strict justice to the character of a

people, whom foreigners, whatever the reason may be, have seldom shown themselves disposed to treat with much indulgence.

The Dutch population of South Africa may be divided into three classes, viz. the residents of Cape Town and its immediate neighbourhood, the corn and wine farmers, and the inland boors. The Dutch residing in and near Cape Town either hold situations under government, or engage in commerce, or subsist upon the produce of their lands. They are, generally speaking, a stout, tall race of men, of ruddy complexion, and inclining to corpulency, lively in their manners and disposition, and good-humoured and hospitable. Few of them have any pretensions to learning or extensive knowledge, but neither are they deficient in observation and good sense; and their indifference to cultivated pursuits arises, in my opinion, less from indolence, than from a want of proper incitement of the kind produced by the example of others. Their conversation, it may be supposed, is chiefly confined to their personal affairs, and to those of the colony, with the general condition of which most of them are well acquainted. They take little or no interest in English or European politics, ex-

cept when these have any reference to South Africa. Warmly attached to the land of their birth, and perfectly contented with their condition, they in most instances feel very averse to all kinds of innovations. That restlessness of spirit, and those ambitious views, which torment so many Europeans, are totally unknown amongst them; and they seldom care to vary the routine of life by travelling, or by change of abode, or in any other way. Nevertheless, they are highly impatient of the censure of foreigners, whether it may relate to their personal habits or to the colony in general; and every one is inclined to resent it as an affront offered to himself individually. The traveller who happens to express his disapprobation of any of the customs of the country, or of the mode of life or style of thinking of its people, is at once accused of malignity and misrepresentation; for their ideas not being expanded by an acquaintance with other parts of the world, they naturally enough suppose that the things appertaining to themselves are unobjectionable, and that these neither require improvement, nor are susceptible of it.

The Dutch gentlemen residing in the country derive their chief amusement from their

gardens and the care of their live stock. Few of them are sportsmen, and they have no idea of walking for pleasure; and seldom go abroad even on horseback, except on business or to pay visits. In summer they rise early; but in the present day at least, they neither drink brandy nor smoke in the morning, though travellers have too often accused them of doing both. Their breakfast is a very slight meal, and they pass the day in overlooking their slaves, and sauntering about their grounds; and dine early, and instead of sitting at table and sipping wine in the European style, they go to sleep for an hour or two. The elder members of a family seldom think of taking up a book for amusement, but the girls sometimes read German and English novels and poetry.

The Dutch are naturally of a sociable disposition, and both in Cape Town and in the country they frequently meet at each other's houses in the evening, and converse or play cards. They also give great entertainments, but chiefly on anniversary occasions, such as marriage and birth-days, when they sit long over the bottle, and dring wine out of immense glasses or cups called *pocals*, which are passed round the table as often as a toast is given, and

emptied by each of the guests in succession. These convivial meetings soon become very noisy and tumultuous, but without any quarrelling; and the host expects that no man shall quit his house sober, and in this he is seldom disappointed. It is only on occasions like the above that the Dutch drink hard; at all other times they are temperate and even abstemious, though they always have abundance of country wine at command.

The young females at the Cape of Good Hope are extremely fond of dancing and music, and of society in general; and they are in most instances qualified to perform well their parts in all of these. They have considerable pretensions to beauty and grace, and enjoy a never-failing vivacity and an agreeable self-possession, which render them highly attractive. The remarkable difference of physical and mental character between the young people of the two sexes in South Africa has been described and commented upon by several writers, and it cannot well escape the notice of a foreigner. The young men have a tendency to be clumsy, listless, and phlegmatic, and of slow apprehension; while, on the other hand, the girls are in early youth slender and deli-

cately-shaped, active, full of animal spirits, and clever and intelligent. It is to be regretted that such promising qualities should in general undergo so little and so short cultivation; for at the Cape of Good Hope, when a female marries and begins to have a family, she thinks that she may altogether withdraw from society, and that she thenceforth ought to find undivided employment within the walls of her home.

The young men at the Cape have been accused of indolence and want of spirit, because they are often found lingering at home in a state of dependent idleness at an age when they ought to be established in some profession, or at least doing something to gain a livelihood. But these grounds of reprehension will nearly vanish, if it is considered how peculiarly the objects of it are situated, and what limited sources of employment the colony affords to those who have been reared and educated within it. The appointments under government obtainable by persons of the kind are few in number and seldom vacant — the requisite supply of members of the learned professions is procured from Europe — there is now neither a military nor a naval service into which the Dutch young men can enter — and no ships

being built or fitted out at the Cape, they have no opportunity of adopting a seafaring life. They might indeed become farmers, but it is seldom that their parents can afford to purchase lands for them in a favourable part of the country; and they are neither willing to go into the interior, and lead the life of an inland boor, nor calculated to prosper in a situation of the kind. They therefore have no resource except commerce, or rather petty traffic; and the most industrious amongst them either open small ware-rooms, or become agents and buy and sell on commission.

With respect to the general circumstances of the Dutch inhabitants of Cape Town, I may remark that few of them can be called rich, but that the majority are in an easy condition, and contrive to subsist upon their means, whatever these may be. All the necessaries of life are remarkably cheap there, and the Dutch too are excellent managers and economists, though at the same time they take care to live well, and pay every attention to their ease and comfort; which they can the better do, as they spend little or no money upon public amusements, or books, or pictures, or fine horses, or ornamental gardening. Taking them altogether, they may be considered a happy and an amicable people;

and if they are but partially acquainted with the nobler and more refined enjoyments of life, they on the other hand know nothing of those extremes of misery and misfortune which exist in all highly civilized societies. They are universally kind and charitable towards each other, and any destitute individual belonging to their circle will always find a home and an asylum amongst them, even without the aid of relationship to enforce his claims upon their benevolence.

The Dutch and English residents of Cape Town have little social intercourse. The Dutch complain of the *hauteur* of the English, and of their love of ceremony and unpliant disposition, and excessive attachment to their own customs. The English, on the other hand, coming from a distant country, have few feelings, views, or interests in common with those persons who have been born and reared in the colony, and receive little pleasure from their society. Dislike on the one side, and indifference on the other, throw the two parties asunder, and it is not likely that a mutual accommodation will ever take place between them; and the more so as many individuals of both nations speak no language but their own.

It seems not a little remarkable that the

Dutch should have reason to accuse the English of arrogance and love of ceremony, these having from the earliest times been the peculiar characteristics of the former in their eastern colonies. It does not appear, however, that they were so at the Cape of Good Hope when it was under the Batavian government; for we have no accounts of the high pretensions of the company's officers there, or of their jealous regard for precedence. At present, too, the Dutch gentlemen who hold official situations in South Africa are distinguished for politeness and affability, and never affect any personal importance in their intercourse with society, or lay claim to any particular prerogatives. But things are very different in Batavia, and in similar places, where the European inhabitants carry the study of etiquette and precedence to the highest pitch, and live in a state of continual dissension on account of the infringements of both, that often happen notwithstanding all their care and attention. Stavorinus informs us, that when two ladies of equal rank meet in their carriages in the streets of Batavia, it often happens that neither of them will make way for the other, and that they both remain in the same spot for hours together, till one of the parties is wearied

into submission, and allows precedence to her adversary. A scene of this kind occurred between two clergymen's wives when he was residing in the settlement. They both stood their ground for a quarter of an hour, and exchanged a great deal of abusive language, but at length drove past each other by mutual consent, continuing however their invectives as long as they were within hearing. The same writer, in describing the convivial gaiety which prevailed at a party given by the British governor of Calcutta says—"This freedom and ease is diametrically opposite to the stiff and obnoxious formality which takes place at Batavia, in the company of the governor-general and the counsellors of India. Indeed an Englishman could never brook the insupportable arrogance with which the Dutch East India Company's servants are treated by their superiors, as well at Batavia as at the out-factories. It would be well if this conduct remained solely confined to the Asiatic regions which gave birth to it; but, unfortunately, we see it continued by purse-proud individuals when they return to a country where from the most ancient times it is known to be in perfect contradiction to the genius and temper of the inhabitants."

The last remark is perfectly correct in reference also to the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope; the restraints imposed by ceremony being almost unknown amongst them, at least in so far as social intercourse is concerned. They visit each other at all times, and very generally without any specific invitation, and never feel themselves disconcerted or put to inconvenience by the arrival of guests, however unexpected. They do not cultivate that domestic privacy to which the English are so much attached, and which makes them dislike sudden visits; though their pride has more to do in relation to this point than they generally are willing to acknowledge. A scrupulous regard for external appearance too often induces the English to repress all feelings of benevolence and hospitality; and rather than be surprised over an indifferent meal by the unforeseen arrival of a visiter, they will cause their servants to prevent his entrance by falsehoods, and will unhesitatingly sacrifice truth, friendship, and sincerity, to escape the shame of appearing to be poor or economical. This, however, is only one of the minor depravities of character which are common to all societies in a state of high civilization, when life assumes such complicated

relations, and men become so intricately situated with respect to each other, that if they have any regard for self-interest or for the esteem of their fellow-beings, they dare no longer indulge a single generous, natural, or unsophisticated feeling, lest it should lead them to commit themselves by neglecting external appearances — the study of these, and the art of imposing upon others, being the sole object and business of their agitated and worthless existence.

Perhaps no town in the world so small as Cape Town contains an equal number of elegant and spacious houses. These appear quite out of proportion to the income and resources of those who inhabit them; and in a certain sense they are so, for one-third of their accommodations usually remains unoccupied, and the rest is in general but scantily furnished. The same remarks apply, though in a less degree, to the country-houses in the neighbourhood of Cape Town. Many of these are built in a style of magnitude and substantialness which seems far to exceed the means of their proprietors, and which is seldom to be observed in European colonies, and perhaps only in those occupied or at least founded by the Dutch. Few other people have expatriated themselves with so

much willingness in forming establishments abroad, or felt so speedily reconciled to a total disjunction from their native land, or have so unreservedly appropriated the produce of their labours to the local improvement of the foreign country to which they may have emigrated. No sooner has a Hollander become resident in a colony, than he conforms himself, without hesitation or delay, to the genius and climate of the place; and, regarding it as his future home, he abandons all thoughts of returning to his native land, and employs his capital and resources in establishing himself, where he happens to be, and in collecting around him the conveniences and enjoyments of life. The Frenchman, with all his flexibility of character, requires a longer time than the Hollander to become reconciled to a foreign land; but nevertheless, when settled there, he sooner or later acquires strong local attachments, and generally at length naturalizes himself to the soil, and looks forward with complacency to spending his days there. But the Englishman, willing as he is to emigrate under the hope of improving his fortune, and long as he may remain abroad, never really becomes a colonist in the strictest sense of the word. He finds it nearly impossible to assimilate himself to any

country except his own, and, to the last, allows his mind to be haunted with the desire of returning there; while he at the same time denies himself various indulgences, in order that, by economy, he may limit the term of his expatriation. The foreign towns of the three nations in question are strongly illustrative of these remarks. The English settlements in almost every part of the world are built in a mean and unsubstantial style, and seldom comprise any ornamental features, however insignificant. They seem to be purposely kept in a condition that will allow of their being abandoned by their occupants with as little loss or regret as possible, on the successful invasion of an hostile power. And it has always been a principle with the British government to spend no money on the improvement of her colonies, probably because she considers their tenure too uncertain to warrant her doing anything of the kind; and because her disregard of that object is likely to inspire their inhabitants with a similar one, and to prevent them employing their surplus capital in a way that would permanently withdraw it from the parent state. It is not my intention to discuss the good or bad effects of this system, but merely to remark that the Dutch have al-

ways viewed the subject in a different light, and considered that it is a piece of sound policy to attach colonists to their place of abode, by surrounding them with useful and agreeable objects, and encouraging them to increase the number of these out of their private resources. Hence the towns which they build in foreign places equal, in stability, grandeur, and convenience, those which they have at home; and their colonists feel a deep attachment to the land where they happen to reside, such as is unknown to the English under similar circumstances, and which the latter would regard as unnatural and unpatriotic. Cape Town is perhaps the handsomest town in the world of its size; and almost every building either respectable or ornamental which it contains, with the exception of the Commercial Exchange, was erected by the Batavian government, or by the Dutch inhabitants, previous to its being captured by the British. And though the colony has now been thirty-five years in our possession, an episcopalian place of worship is only now in the course of erection; and the members of the established church have hitherto been under the necessity of meeting in one of the Dutch churches, the use of which has been liberally granted them by its particular congregation.

The class of colonists next to be described is composed of corn and wine farmers. These people are mostly found within one hundred miles of Cape Town; and they form the mass of the white population in the districts of Stellenbosch, the Paarl, Drakenstein, Franchhoek, &c. In the stronger points of their character they resemble the higher class of Dutch in Cape Town, only they are less polished, and have fewer pretensions to knowledge or education. They are likewise extremely indolent and sluggish in their dispositions, and rather gross in their ideas; and, in short, have precisely those habits and manners which too many writers have erroneously described as prevailing in Dutch society in South Africa in general. These men are in easy circumstances; and having plenty of slaves at command, they do no manual labour of any kind, and sometimes scarcely take the trouble to superintend their farms. They are particularly kind to strangers and travellers; and most of them possess comfortable houses, and all the necessaries of life in abundance. They smoke, sleep, and eat a great deal; but are withal very temperate in drinking. They seldom think of any amusement except shooting, and will hardly attempt even that, unless the game lies almost within gun-shot of their own

doors. Their conversation is confined to their domestic affairs, and to those of their neighbours; and they have little knowledge of any part of the world except South Africa, and consider travelling for the sake of curiosity as a piece of unaccountable folly. Few people in any country lead so easy a life as they do, whether as respects mental or bodily exertion; and happily their idleness does not dispose them to be mischievous or malignant; and even though it were to do so, its attendant sloth would neutralize such qualities, or at least render them in a great measure ineffective. Their wives are notable managers, though they do little more than overlook the women slaves, and direct their labours; while they themselves sit the greater part of the day at a small table furnished with implements and materials for making tea, a cup of which they offer to every friend or visiter that happens to enter the house.

The general character and condition of the wine and corn farmers presents too few peculiarities or interesting features, to require any farther description; and I will now proceed to speak of the inland boors, who form a large proportion of the white population of the colony. The isolated situation of these men has pro-

duced in them a corresponding singularity of character, which, however, is not precisely of the kind that might be expected. Those mild manners and that gentleness of disposition, which almost universally belong to a pastoral people, do not exist amongst the boors in the interior of South Africa; although their seclusion from the world, and their tranquil and unlaborious mode of life, would seem highly favourable to the developement of such qualities.

The habitations of this class of colonists are generally twelve or fifteen miles apart, and very often twenty or thirty, or more; and the intervening tracts of country, extensive as they are, do not always afford sufficient pasture for their flocks, which form their sole means of subsistence. They never practise agriculture of any kind, because the want of labourers, and the nature of the soil, alike forbid it; and few of them even have gardens for the production of vegetables. These they seldom taste, and bread is an equally scarce article at their tables, and they contrive to live almost exclusively upon animal food. As soon as one sheep is eaten up, another is killed; and when they slaughter an ox, which they seldom do, the greater part of its flesh is

smoke-dried, and forms what they call *bill-tong*; and this they occasionally eat along with fresh meat, as a substitute for bread and vegetables. Neither do they generally use milk, the acrid and alkaline quality of their pastures being unfavourable for cows and goats. Tea, coffee, sugar, spirituous liquors, and similar articles, are in a great measure beyond their reach; and they even use salt very sparingly, either from economy or from a natural dislike to it. The bottoms of their bedsteads and chairs are made of dried hides, and they use thongs of the same material instead of cordage; and even the skulls of oxen are sometimes placed in the front of their houses to serve as seats. This practice is not peculiar to South Africa. The Guachos, a nation of mixed Indian and Spanish descent, inhabiting the Pampa plains extending along the Rio de la Plata, generally seat themselves upon the skulls of horses or wild oxen, with both of which animals their country abounds.

Thus the inland boors are necessarily satisfied with the productions of their own soil, small in number as these are; and few men either civilized or savage lead a life in appearance so destitute of comfort and attraction. Surrounded by sterile and uninhabitable

deserts, cut off from all regular intercourse with their fellow-beings, exposed to the incursions of Boschmen and the ravages of wild beasts, and incapable of materially improving their condition, they would feel miserable did they know anything better; but, on the contrary, they are a contented race of people, and appear not to have a wish ungratified. While travelling in the colony, I visited a boor's farm upon the Lion's River, near Beaufort, and walked over his grounds with him. He informed me that it had not rained there for four years, and that the neighbouring river had become so brackish that it was scarcely drinkable. He had tried to make a garden, but without success, owing to the alkaline nature of the soil; and he pointed out a small piece of ground which he had sowed three different times with wheat that same season, the blade upon which appeared only in small patches a few inches high. The surface of the ground near his house was beginning to exhibit a thin coat of saltpetre; and he jestingly said, that he believed he must turn his attention to crops of that kind, instead of attempting to raise any more grain. A lion had recently devoured his two horses, and his cattle were dying for want

of pasture. His household furniture consisted of two wooden stools, a large chest, a table, and a bedstead, and a few plates and dishes of earthenware; and he had not tasted bread for several weeks, nor could he kill any game because he was unprovided with ammunition.

The above is not a singular case. Hundreds of the inland boors have equal difficulties to struggle against, and equal hardships to endure; and when one considers this, it will appear that those writers who have accused them of unconquerable indolence and baneful contentment, have done so unreasonably, because in reality no exertions of their own can ameliorate their condition, or bring within their reach the conveniences and enjoyments of life. What is an individual situated like the one above described to do? To which point are his energies to be directed? Where shall he find materials to work upon? Let him who condemns the laziness of the boors endeavour to answer these questions fairly, and he will be better able to judge how far they deserve his censures in that respect as well as in others.

The inland boors are of a sombre and phlegmatic disposition, which is doubtless nourished

and confirmed by the peculiarity of their situation. They have either slaves or Hottentots to attend to their flocks; and if they count these in the evening on their return from pasture, it is as much as they commonly do in the course of the day, which they spend mostly in walking about the house, and conversing a little with their wives and families. No amusement is known in the house of a boor, nor is any book ever found there except the Bible. The young people seldom resort to games or sports, or dance, or sing, or play any musical instrument; and when the two sexes meet, little conversation takes place between them, and the men and women generally sit at different ends of the room, except when meals are served. The boors have three of these daily, and all of them consist of animal food dressed in nearly the same way; and the carcass from which it has been obtained generally hangs from the roof of the apartment in which the table is laid, and is often within a few feet of the elbow of the master of the house.

The boors of South Africa have long been celebrated for hospitality; and when a foreigner criticises their manners or character, the Dutch in Cape Town never fail to remind him of their

claims to that virtue, in a way that shows that they consider it equivalent to a thousand other good qualities. I am far from denying the hospitality of the boors; but as they exercise it in a very particular way, and as it is regarded as the main prop of their character, I may be allowed to make a few observations upon the subject.

The inland boor seldom or never asks any one to enter his house; but if a stranger chooses to do so of his own accord, no objection is made; and should he remain till a meal is served, he is expected to take his place at table without invitation, and he is equally free to depart when he pleases, without ceremony or notice. Everything therefore depends upon the will of the traveller, who must always make the first advances, and who may thus either take up his abode in the desert, or seek the shelter of the nearest house, as may best suit his taste and humour at the moment. How few parts of Europe afford anything to compare to this! A person travelling, whether through the most sequestered or the most populous districts of that country, would generally in vain solicit the hospitality of their inhabitants. Were he to do so, some would be

startled at his boldness, and others would regard him as a robber, and drive him from their doors; and supposing that some necessitous person did consent to run the risk of lodging and feeding him, he would most likely demand of his guest five times the value of the accommodations bestowed.

What is it then that renders the hospitality of the boors so distasteful to most of the foreigners that happen to partake of it? The cause lies in the manner of the thing, not in the matter. The boor bestows no smile of welcome upon his guest, he scarcely speaks to him; and when a meal is served, he merely makes a sign to him to be seated at table. He views him with cold indifference; and the shelter and food which he bestows seem to be given, not in compliment to the individual himself, but as a matter of custom or necessity. It is impossible to be pleased with treatment of this kind, even when we know and feel that we have no claim whatever upon any man's hospitality; and for this reason I have almost always, when travelling in the remoter parts of the colony, preferred remaining in my waggon to entering any boor's house, though I was well aware that it would be freely opened

to me. These men, however, receive their own countrymen with much greater cordiality than they do foreigners; and the former never fail to speak of their kindness and benevolence in the highest terms, and are astonished that any one should differ with them on that subject.

The boors have an unconquerable aversion to foreigners, nor can they understand what induces them to travel through their country; the acquisition of knowledge or the gratification of curiosity being motives which are utterly incomprehensible to the mind of a boor. That enterprising and scientific traveller Burchell, who has added so extensively to our knowledge of South Africa and its productions, is spoken of by the boors in terms of contempt, and named "the silly flower-gatherer." They knew that the collections of plants which he made could not be intended for sale; and, unable to conceive what was the object of his botanical researches, they regarded them as a proof of his imbecility of mind.

The means of education, as may be supposed, are very limited in every part of the colony except Cape Town, and most of all amongst the boors in the interior. However, these people do not altogether neglect the instruction of

their children when chance throws an opportunity of the kind in their way, which frequently occurs, there being a set of Europeans, chiefly disbanded soldiers, who take up the trade of schoolmaster, and wander about the country in search of employment. They teach reading, writing, and the elements of arithmetic; and any boor who may require their services for his family, receives one of them into his house as a guest, and pays him ten or twelve shillings a month besides. He is seldom employed by one individual longer than a year, and generally for a much shorter time; but while he remains with his patron, he is treated as one of the family, and is often much respected by its members.

The children of the boors partake of the saturnine temperament of their fathers and mothers. The first and indeed the only plaything which the boys use is a large whip, which they exercise in imitation of a waggoner, and in this way they acquire at an early age that extraordinary dexterity in the management of draught oxen, which is in a manner peculiar to the natives of South Africa. When the young boor approaches manhood, he begins to take delight in shooting, and becomes a connoisseur

in cattle, and exerts himself to procure a fine, swift, and well-matched team; and the feats which it performs, and the characters of the different animals composing it, constitute his chief subjects of conversation. His dress is coarse and simple, and always of the same fashion, nor does he study personal appearance, or place any value upon trinkets and finery, even as a means of attracting the notice of the other sex. The girls are generally well-looking, but deficient in vivacity, which may be attributed to their having no compnaions of their own age, and no occupations or amusements except what are afforded by the daily routine of their father's house. Most of them marry very early, and the courtship is seldom of long duration; they make useful wives, and display much activity in the management of the general concerns of their families.

I have been thus particular in describing the character and mode of life of the inland boors, because they are altogether a singular people, and because there is every chance of their remaining unchanged for a long period, or perhaps as long as they exist at all. Those revolutions and political events which might affect the condition of the inhabitants of Cape Town

and its neighbourhood, would be unfelt by the inland boors, to whom it is a matter of indifference, except in so far as national prejudices are concerned, whether the colony is in possession of the English, or the French, or the Dutch, or the Portuguese. Neither would any acts of the colonial government materially affect them, except such as related to taxation; an evil of which they are not likely ever to have cause to complain, because all that could be obtained from them in that way would hardly repay the trouble and expense of collection. They are equally beyond the influence of commercial restrictions, for the want of foreign importations or of colonial manufactures would occasion them very little inconvenience. All the habitable spots in the southern part of the colony being already occupied and appropriated, there is no opportunity for emigrants to diffuse themselves amongst the boors, and introduce new ideas and modes of life; while the distance at which the latter live from each other is hostile also to the occurrence of those slow and gradual changes which take place in all communities in the lapse of time, even without the influence of foreign intercourse. The boors will therefore, in all probability, be the same as what

they now are, two or three centuries hence, should South Africa continue habitable so long.

In examining the condition of any particular people with a view to discover what influence it has upon their character, we are naturally led to seek for parallel examples in other parts of the world, in order to find whether similar circumstances always produce similar results. But we shall hardly be able to do this in the present instance; because in no other country is there a civilized population sprinkled over an immense extent of territory in the same small proportion, and under the same disabilities, as in South Africa. The condition of the back settlers of America, doubtless, bears some resemblance to that of the boors. But the former people, though residing in the deepest solitude, and totally destitute of relations with their fellow-beings, are forced to lead an active and industrious life. The soil which they inhabit, to be productive, requires a variety and a succession of labours, which it afterwards fully repays; and this encourages its proprietor to persevere in his toils, and to form schemes of more extensive improvement. One day he wields the axe, on another he guides the plough, and on a third he erects fences, or sets fire to the

thickets; and no sooner is the present object accomplished, than a new one awakens his interest and demands his exertions. On the other hand, the labours and expectations of the boor cease when he has built his house and stocked his farm with cattle, and he thenceforth confides in Nature for the gradual increase of the latter, which constitute his sole wealth, his fields being unfit for cultivation, and his condition unimprovable by his own exertions. Hence the difference of character between the two individuals in question, though their respective situations seem to correspond. The American backwoodsman is of an active disposition and buoyant temper, and enjoys scenes of enterprise and adventure; while the boor is morose, spiritless, and melancholic at all times, and awkward and irresolute under circumstances of novelty or danger.

In the physical condition of the inhabitants of the Llanos, in the neighbourhood of the river Oronoco, we find a resemblance to that of the boors of South Africa. These Llanos are immense steppes or plains, scantily supplied with water, and producing only a few palm and mimosa trees, but affording tolerable pasture during two-thirds of the year. There are some

scattered farms upon them, many miles distant from each other; and their occupants devote themselves exclusively to the breeding of cattle, and allow their flocks to wander at will over the surrounding deserts, except at night, when slaves are sent on horseback to collect them together, and bring them near the house. No kind of agriculture is practised in the Llanos; and those inhabiting them live altogether upon animal food, part of which is prepared by being dried in the sun and sprinkled with salt — an article of diet very similar to the *bill-tong* of the African boors. Like the latter, the Spaniards, or Meztizos, inhabiting the Llanos, are indolent, apathetic, and unambitious, and never attempt to subject Nature to compulsion, nor feel a desire for more than she voluntarily produces and bestows.

The national character of the Dutch appears in a more favourable light in South Africa than in any of their other settlements abroad. If we look towards the Eastern islands, we shall find this people jealous of all other nations, tyrannical to those under their control, devoted to pomp, ceremony, and parade, yet mean in the midst of grandeur, and avaricious even in their extravagance; sensual and indolent to the last

degree, and always preferring to secure or extend their dominion by means of fire and sword, rather than by acts of kindness or the arts of conciliation. In Guiana, we see them in a continual state of warfare with slaves, fighting in the midst of swamps and morasses with parties of Maroons, and endeavouring to terrify the yet unrevolted blacks into abject submission, by inflicting cruel punishments upon their rebellious countrymen. Casting our eyes towards Japan, we observe them imprisoned in a small island, treated with contempt by the natives, and submitting to the most degrading observances, that they may preserve the exclusive privilege of trading with a people with whom a hatred of foreigners forms the basis of national character. On the other hand, if South Africa presents a scattered and disjointed society, indifferent to mental cultivation and unambitious of improvement, she at least affords a view of men living in a state of tranquillity and comparative innocence, and neither harassed by a deadly climate, nor corrupted by daily scenes of usurpation, rapine, and bloodshed.

I do not consider it necessary to say almost anything of the English residents of South Africa. In Cape Town they are chiefly either

persons officially connected with government, or merchants on a greater or smaller scale; but the number of both is inconsiderable. Neither the one nor the other has much intercourse with the Dutch; and though the colony has been so long in our possession, the mass of its population has not adopted British habits or modes of life, but continues to adhere to its national customs; however, the English language is now very generally spoken or understood, except in the interior districts. Grahamstown, upon the Great Fish River, is inhabited entirely by British emigrants; and it contains nearly two thousand persons. A few of these are merchants, and the rest are shopkeepers and mechanics. Their condition differs from that of the other colonists only in so far as they have no slaves, with whom they can well dispense; there being many half-blood Hottentots in the neighbourhood who engage themselves as servants or labourers for trifling wages. The inhabitants of Grahamstown are an industrious and thriving people, and their modes of life are similar to what they have respectively been accustomed to in their native country.

A certain race of colonists, which cannot properly be classed with any of those already men-

tioned, still remains to be described. It is composed of a mixture of Dutch, English, Hottentots, Caffres, and runaway slaves, and generally receives the name of Bastards. These people inhabit the country bordering upon both sides of the Gariep, or Orange River, and lead a marauding life, and are divided into various tribes, or parties, each of which follows and rallies round a chief or commander, chosen from amongst themselves. They possess waggons, oxen, fire-arms, and flocks of sheep, most of which have been stolen from the inland colonists, or procured by the murder of some of the travellers or traders who occasionally cross the Orange River on their way to visit the tribes residing far in the interior. Most of these bastard communities have kraals or assemblages of huts, which bear the name of their respective leaders, and where they congregate and reside at those seasons when the neighbouring country affords pasture and water. The men are mostly tall and well-shaped, and of a copper colour; and they possess much more courage and energy than the genuine races of Hottentots and Boschmen. They are expert in the use of fire-arms, and of a cruel and vindictive disposition; and are infinitely more to be dread-

ed by travellers than any other people in South Africa; for they value waggons and European articles as much as they do cattle, and seldom, like the Boschmen, confine their acts of plunder to the stealing of the latter. The Bastards are supposed to derive their origin from some Europeans, who, being obliged to fly from the colony on account of their crimes, found an asylum in the neighbourhood of the Orange River, and there formed an association of runaway slaves and wandering Hottentots. It is very certain that these banditti often receive an accession of strength from persons of different complexions, who find it necessary to retire beyond the reach of the arm of the law; and it is probable that they will continue to increase in number, till famine, or the want of sufficient pasture-grounds, excites dissension amongst themselves, and causes them to fight and to destroy each other.

There is one other class of the population of South Africa which I have not yet brought under review, nor does it, strictly speaking, belong to this division of the work; but as the persons in question have been introduced into the colony by Europeans, and as they have a great admixture of the blood of the latter in

their veins, they may as appropriately find a place here as anywhere else. I will therefore now make some remarks upon the slave population of South Africa.

The present slave population of the colony amounts to about thirty-two thousand individuals, nearly one half of whom are females. Within these last twenty years, the number of males has continued nearly the same, but that of the other sex has experienced an increase of three thousand. The present race of slaves owes its origin to that which the Dutch themselves formerly imported or purchased from foreigners; their laws having always prohibited their reducing to bondage the aborigines of the country.

It was from their possessions in the Eastern islands that the Dutch obtained most of their slaves; and the Malay physiognomy still predominates amongst these people, numerous and frequent as are the intermixtures which they have undergone. A considerable number of Mozambique negroes have likewise at different times been introduced into the colony, probably by Portuguese and Brazilian slave-ships touching there for refreshment or from stress of weather. Madagascar, too, has furnished a few

slaves, but the descendants of these are no longer distinguishable by any peculiarity of person or visage. The three races above mentioned have at all times intermarried with each other, and the females have had continual intercourse with Hottentots and with Europeans, and it is the offspring of this intermixture which forms the present motley slave population of Cape Town. The diversities of physiognomy observable there are quite perplexing, and the instances are rare in which one can accurately determine to what particular race any slave belongs, and distinctions of the kind are daily becoming more faint, and will soon be entirely lost, except in so far as colour is concerned. Many of the slaves are as black as negroes, but the general complexion of the majority is an olive-brown; and no small number (particularly of the female sex) are as white as Europeans.

All the domestics in the colony are slaves, with a very few exceptions; for those persons who cannot afford to purchase individuals of the kind, hire them from any of their richer neighbours who may have more of them than they require for their own service. Some Dutch families possess twenty or thirty grown-

up slaves, only a few of whom they retain at home, the others being employed abroad for the benefit of their owners. This system may appear an odious one, but it is in reality quite the reverse, when, as often happens, the master of a slave tells him that he has no occasion for him at home, and that he may dispose of himself as he pleases, provided he pays him a certain sum monthly. The slave accepts these conditions, and hastens to seek employment, in which he is encouraged to be assiduous by the reflection, that whatever sum he may gain beyond what is exacted by his master will belong exclusively to himself. Under this system, slavery assumes its mildest form, and approaches to the nature of heavy taxation; and the individual, freed from the presence and the caprices of his master, may almost forget his own real condition, or at least alleviate it by the consideration that he does not labour solely and entirely for the benefit of another. This view of the subject necessarily implies that the former shall not demand from his slave a greater sum than he can easily earn, and that he shall not dictate how the surplus is to be disposed of, or expect to receive any account of it.

The slaves at the Cape of Good Hope are, generally speaking, mild and humane in their dispositions, full of vivacity, gentle in their manners, and neither vindictive nor deceitful. I am well aware that many of the Dutch are in the habit of giving them a very different character; but I must decline placing much confidence in the accuracy of what they say upon the subject, on the ground that it is usual with Europeans in every colony to calumniate, abuse, and despise the persons subjected to their sway. Were we to believe some of the West India planters, we should suppose the negroes to be monsters of stupidity, laziness, and ingratitude. Were we to believe the Spaniards, we should conclude that they had found the natives of Mexico and Peru to be universally vicious, imbecile, and contemptible. Were we to believe the first English settlers in North America, we should regard its natives as worse than ferocious and untameable beasts — and were we to believe many of the European residents in India, we should refuse to give the Hindoos credit for common intelligence, or for a single good or respectable quality. Though it may seem an inconsistency to assert that the generality of

mankind are not qualified to form a correct estimate of those with whom they have daily intercourse, and who live under their observation, and perhaps even in their houses, the thing is nevertheless true, because in judging of them, they exercise their temper and their prejudices instead of their understanding.

Some of the earlier travellers in the colony speak of the desperate and revengeful character of the Malays and the Mozambique negroes; but acts of violence on the part of slaves, either towards their masters or other individuals, are now extremely rare at the Cape of Good Hope. Neither is the country any longer infested by those bands of runaway slaves who used to rob the farmers, and even commit ravages in the vicinity of Cape Town; and the occasional apprehension and condemnation of whom seldom failed to lead to those barbarous tortures and cruel executions which the Dutch government has been reproached with too long permitting, but which it latterly found proper to abolish. It is probable, that in proportion as the condition of the colonists was improved, an amelioration took place in that of their slaves; and that the latter at present enjoy kinder masters and milder labours than they did forty or fifty

years ago, and that they have consequently become more humane and more contented.

A few runaway slaves generally inhabit the clefts and recesses of Table Mountain, on which their fires may often be observed at night. They subsist chiefly by collecting fuel, which they privately dispose of in Cape Town or its neighbourhood; and having purchased provisions, return to their solitary haunts, where they have no shelter excepting what the rocks afford. These men are neither dangerous nor troublesome, and they never commit depredations in a body. It is said that a small colony of revolted slaves exists upon Cape Hanglip at the mouth of False Bay, and that they form a social community, having houses, laws, and landed property. They cultivate the ground, and rear abundance of cattle, which they exchange for various articles that are brought to them in boats by one or two individuals in Simon's Town, who carry on the traffic in secret, and who alone are allowed to visit the territories of these South African Maroons, which are almost inaccessible to strangers, because the promontory where they are situated is divided from the continent by a narrow arm of the sea, and encompassed with sunken rocks

and breakers. It does not appear that this settlement has ever given any annoyance to the colony, either by piracies or by encouraging slaves to desert their masters; and probably, for this reason, neither government nor private individuals have thought it prudent to disturb or dispossess its inhabitants.

Sparmann and Barrow, and other writers upon the Cape of Good Hope, relate various instances of the atrocities committed by slaves there, in revenge of real or imaginary wrongs; and state that they often commit suicide, and even kill their fellow-slaves, in order to punish their masters for maltreatment; the pecuniary loss which he incurs by the death of the party or parties being in their opinion the severest retribution that can be inflicted upon him.

This ingenious mode of revenge is not confined to South Africa; and its prevalence in other countries is one of the strongest comments that can be made upon the evils of slavery; for it proves that persons in that condition value their lives so little as willingly to sacrifice them, under torments and ignominy, for the sake of satisfying a sudden resentment, or from the desire of retaliating injuries. Desperate men, in a state of freedom, sometimes

commit crimes, and even involve themselves in ruin, with the sole view of injuring those who may have oppressed them; but they seldom are so infatuated as to throw away their lives for a similar purpose; because they feel that their souls and bodies appertain exclusively to themselves, and are not objects of mere traffic and valuation. We must therefore regard the atrocious acts in question, not as a proof of the vice and depravity of their perpetrators, but as a perdurable evidence of the abstract accursedness of slavery.

Lavysse, in his Description of Venezuela, speaking of the frequent practice of abortion and infanticide amongst the negro slave women in those Spanish settlements, where they are cruelly treated, informs us that it is not uncommon for a man and his wife to resolve upon poisoning themselves, their children, and their fellow-slaves, with a view to revenge their personal wrongs, and to escape future misery. In order to witness and fully enjoy the distress and perplexity of their masters, they reserve themselves for the last victims of the tragedy, and usually begin the work of destruction by poisoning their children, and then do the same to some of their companions in bondage, selecting

such as are most useful and valuable to their owner — such as artificers and mechanics. The poisons employed are of slow operation; and those who administer them, having contemplated their successive effects for weeks or months together, and seen their master reduced to ruin, at length calmly devote themselves to death, and perish without remorse or regret. Kalm, in his Travels in North America, states, that in his time the negro slaves there often had recourse to secret poisoning when they wished to take revenge upon their masters, and that they always selected as their victims his most valuable and favourite servants, caring little about detection and punishment, if they succeeded in the execution of their purpose.

Atrocities like these are now unknown at the Cape of Good Hope. Desperate crimes rarely occur amongst the slave population there; and even continued maltreatment (uncommon as it is) seldom leads them to take revenge upon their masters, though they enjoy very favourable opportunities of doing so, owing to the isolated situation of the farms in most parts of the colony. Nothing is more common than to find a boor and his family residing thirty or forty miles distant from any other habitation.

Persons so situated are entirely in the power of their slaves, who might at any time destroy them all, plunder the house, and, driving off the cattle, proceed far into the neighbouring deserts, and there remain undisturbed, and even unheard-of, as long as they chose to avoid observation. People travelling in the interior of the country are, if possible, still more at the mercy of their slaves; because, at such times, the latter are usually provided with fire-arms, and have the care of the cattle, and, as it were, the entire management of the journey. But neither in the one case nor in the other is any danger ever to be apprehended; and the master, so far from distrusting his servants, looks to them for protection and assistance in the hour of need.

In no part of the world, I believe, does slavery assume so mild a character as at the Cape of Good Hope. In Cape Town and its neighbourhood the condition of the slaves is better than in the remote districts, where field labour is required, and where their masters cannot so easily command the comforts and necessaries of life; but even in such situations they are for the most part well fed and decently clothed, and their cheerfulness and alacrity

show that they are neither overworked abroad nor tyrannized over at home. Here I speak in reference to the men only; for the females perform none but domestic duties, and spend most of the day within doors, and in the same apartment with their mistresses; and either attend to the dairy or the kitchen, or employ themselves at their needle; so that their occupations are much more light and agreeable than those of the majority of women-servants in Great Britain.

The Cape of Good Hope is perhaps the only place in the world where a state of bondage has no external badge attached to it; and this, doubtless, has tended to improve the character of the slave population there. In most other slave countries, that class of people are either prohibited from wearing certain articles of dress, or are obliged to assume a particular garb or emblem, to distinguish them from freemen, and to prevent them for a moment losing a recollection of their degraded condition. Formerly no slave in Cape Town, male or female, was allowed to walk abroad after sunset without carrying a lantern; but this regulation no longer exists, nor has any disorder or inconvenience arisen from its disuse.

It would appear, that though a state of high civilization may teach men to declaim against a state of slavery, it does not always lead them to ameliorate the condition of their slaves. The Romans, the Greeks, and the Spartans, treated these people with equal cruelty and contempt, notwithstanding their boasted love of civil and political liberty. When we read of Cato the elder selling his old slaves, or abandoning them to famine and misery — when we find that Demosthenes hired out his sword-cutlers, and supported himself upon their wages — and when we are told that the Spartans encouraged their young men to roam about the country and assault and kill any Helots that they might meet, we are inclined to wonder at the inconsistency of the ancients, and to suspect that they were really noble-minded only in great public emergencies, and that they seldom invested themselves with the garb of humanity, except on holidays, when every one would be abroad to see and applaud them.

The Athenians employed every possible means to degrade their slaves in their own estimation and in that of others. They were not allowed to dress or to wear their hair like freemen, and their masters were prohibited from

bestowing upon them any name that had ever belonged to a distinguished person.

It is not a little singular that the moderns should in most colonies choose those very names for their slaves, which the ancients strictly forbade the use of in similar cases. And if the Greeks in some instances were wont to treat particular slaves with kindness, the individuals thus distinguished were either useful in ministering to the pleasures of their masters, or in superintending their estates and domestic affairs, and owed to these qualities alone the indulgence and estimation which they might enjoy. With regard to the Spartan amusement of killing Helots during the night, it has been objected, that it is impossible that Lycurgus could ever have encouraged or even permitted such wanton barbarities merely with a view to render the youth of his republic dexterous in the use of arms. This argument seems fallacious, for though Lycurgus was a just man, he may not have been a humane one; and he perhaps wished to impress the Spartans with the opinion that a slave was unworthy of sympathy, and entitled to live only by sufferance. But if he inculcated that the practice of agriculture, and of the mechanical arts, was beneath the dignity of a

citizen, how could he consistently encourage the young warriors to destroy the class of men upon whom he had devolved these degrading occupations, and without whose labours and assistance his republic could not have existed one week? The Helots were as necessary to the Spartans as the negroes are to our West India planters; and were the latter to instruct their children to shoot any slaves that they might find abroad after nightfall, their conduct would not be more repugnant to humanity and common sense, than was that of the Spartans in reference to the Helots, on whom they exclusively depended for the cultivation of the ground, and for the few conveniences of life which they did enjoy.

The average price of a male slave in Cape Town is from one hundred to one hundred and twenty pounds, and that of a female thirty or forty pounds less. But the price of all kinds of slaves, and particularly of mechanics, has of late considerably declined, owing to the influx of European emigrants into the colony in the year 1822; most of whom finding it impossible to cultivate the lands allotted to them by the British government, either entered the service of the colonists, or exercised their respective

trades in Cape Town, and in various parts of the neighbouring country. Barrow has justly remarked, that in no quarter of the world is slavery less necessary than in South Africa, where a temperate climate permits Europeans to labour without injury to their constitution. However, the evil has been introduced, and is now too extensive to be speedily or easily removed, although some deluded enthusiasts, if they had their own way, (which happily they have not,) would effect this by general and immediate emancipation. In the mean time, let them console themselves with the assurance that the slaves in South Africa are better treated and more fortunately situated than those of almost any other country, and that the removing of their fetters is consequently the less necessary and urgent, and may best be accomplished in a gradual way.

I never was asked for charity in the streets of Cape Town but once. The applicant was an old woman, who, in answer to my inquiries respecting her condition, told me that she was formerly a slave, but that her mistress had recently died, leaving her "*nothing but her freedom.*" Let those hasty and intemperate emancipationists, who raise their voices so loud,

consider well the nature and consequences of the measure which they advocate—and let them scrupulously examine whether it will be for the benefit of those who are its objects, lest, in suddenly delivering them from bondage, they leave them with "*nothing but their freedom.*"

# INDIA.

## THE INDIAN OCEAN.

The Indian Ocean, notwithstanding its remoteness from Europe, was from the earliest ages much better known there, than the Atlantic can be said to have been previous to the voyages of Columbus and Vasco de Gama. The Romans possessed, at a very early period, a tolerably correct idea of the geography of that part of the Indian Sea which extends between the mouths of the Arabian and Persian gulfs and the island of Ceylon. This was the result of the indirect commercial intercourse which they carried on with the rich countries of the East, and of the publication of the writings of Megasthenes, whom Seleucus Nicanor had sent as ambassador to the city of Palibothra in Hindostan.

When Egypt became a province of the Roman empire, the direct trade with India that had been established by the Ptolemies, by way

of the Red Sea, still continued, and furnished an exhaustless stream of information respecting the great Eastern Ocean; and truth began to be separated from fable, and facts confirmed which had at first been deemed incredible. Nevertheless, everything related of the Indian Ocean was yet strongly tinged with the marvellous and imaginative; and its prodigious and unknown extent, and the vast variety and the curiousness of its productions, were circumstances well calculated to awaken the interest of an enlightened people, and to lead them to hope and expect that Nature's wonders would be found to multiply in proportion to the progress of discovery.

The romance of nautical or terrestrial discovery has long ceased to exist. The ancients being acquainted with only a small portion of the globe, and that portion lying in a temperate climate, they could neither conclude from analogy that the productions of other parts of the world must resemble those of their own, nor have any reason to suppose that a strong general similarity would be found to prevail amongst the inhabitants of the most remote regions. Hence they not only gave credit to tales of monsters in a human shape, and of trees and

rocks of miraculous qualities; but did not think it at all astonishing or repugnant to the principles of Nature that such things should exist.

But the developement of geographical science in modern times has satisfied us that Nature everywhere confines herself within certain limits in so far as respects the general forms and qualities of animated beings; and, in the present day, even the most credulous person does not suppose it possible that those regions which remain unexplored shall be found to contain tribes of men with only one eye, or with feet large enough to shade their bodies from the sun, or nations of Amazons, or races of giants or of pigmies, or shrubs that produce geese, or trees whose leaves on falling to the ground become living mice, or birds of prey large enough to carry away young elephants in their claws.

By merely knowing the latitude of any country, we can now, upon principles of analogy, form a correct estimate of its productions, and of the character and condition of its inhabitants; assured that the novelties which it may produce in any department of Nature will, instead of being calculated to excite popular wonder,

possess an interest in the eyes of men of science only, or at least of those individuals who take delight in tracing the shades of difference which serve to distinguish and classify the various objects which present themselves upon the surface of our globe. Hence no traveller now attempts to deceive us with marvellous narrations, because our geographical knowledge would enable us to detect him; and hence ignorant men listen with indifference to the recitals of voyagers, because they know that these are not likely to convey any information savouring of the wild and wonderful, or calculated to amuse an uncultivated understanding. Humboldt remarks, that it is possible that in the unexplored regions of New Holland or of South America, we may find the lichens and mosses which are so diminutive in Europe, assuming ligneous trunks, and growing to the height of our oaks, and forming immense forests. The man of science would be astonished and enchanted by a discovery of the kind; while an individual who had never studied nature, would perceive nothing uncommon in the fact, and would perhaps ask in what respect the forest in question differed from those of any other country.

At what period the Indian Ocean was first

visited by foreign ships is uncertain; nor would this question probably have engaged the attention of any one, had not the situation of the country named Ophir in the Scriptures been a subject of dispute amongst geographers. The notices which we possess respecting the ancient Ophir and its productions are so obscure and indefinite as to apply to almost any tropical region yielding gold; and hence some writers have placed this celebrated land on the west coast of Africa, while others have referred it to the eastern side of the same continent, in the neighbourhood of Sofala; a third class of authorities respectively identify it with Arabia Felix, with Hindostan, and with Serendiep or Ceylon; and latterly, a theorist, bolder than any of his predecessors, has pronounced Bencoolen, in the island of Sumatra, to have been the seat of Ophir and the scene of Queen Sheba's glory. It seems in the highest degree improbable that a people so little enterprising as the Jews were in the time of Solomon, and so occupied by internal dissensions, should have made long voyages, and discovered new countries; and we may therefore suppose that they obtained their gold and spices at as little distance from home as was possible, and never extended their expeditions

beyond the coasts of Arabia Felix. The Arabs were doubtless the first foreign nation that ventured to traverse the great Indian Ocean; for the early Portuguese navigators found them scattered over nearly the whole of its archipelago, and in many places naturalized to the soil.

The Indian Sea may be considered as commencing at the tropic of Capricorn, from whence, bounded on the west by the island of Madagascar and by Africa, and on the east by New South Wales and Sumatra, it extends in an expanse almost unbroken, except by the peninsula of Hindostan, to the tropic of Cancer. In no other part of the equatorial ocean do we find so large a space presenting so few islands, and preserving so uniform a depth, and offering so few obstacles to the progress of the navigator. With the exception of the three islands composing the Mauritius, and the inconsiderable archipelagoes of the Maldives and Laccadives, nothing breaks the continuity of this watery area, eighteen hundred miles broad, and two thousand long. Hence its waves roll with a slow and mountainous swell, its trade winds are steady and regular, and it is seldom disturbed by violent tempests, and usually enjoys a beautifully transparent atmosphere. The

unbroken character of the Indian Ocean is remarkable, not on account of the extent of open sea which it comprehends, but because this is situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the equator, a thing which nowhere else occurs. It is merely necessary to cast our eyes on the map to perceive that all other tropical parts of the ocean are thickly studded with islands, either isolated and of great size, such as Sumatra, Java, Borneo, St. Domingo, Cuba, New Guinea, &c., or in archipelagoes and clusters, like the Gallapagos, the Carribeans, the New Hebrides, the Sandwich and Society Islands, and others. Beyond the limits of the tropics, the earth seems to shrink under the ocean, except in those places where she assumes the bold form of a continent, as in the instances of Greenland and New Holland; and the nearer we approach towards the Arctic and Antarctic regions, the more sparingly do we find islands either in groups or solitary. The accumulation of islands under the equator is evidently the result of the spherical figure of our planet, and of its diurnal revolutions, which give it a continual tendency to extend its dimensions in the line and direction of its greatest circumference; upon the established principle,

that the centrifugal force increases in proportion to the distance from the axis of motion.

Though the physical character and aspect of the Indian Ocean bears a strong similarity to that of the tropical parts of the Atlantic, still the resemblance is not complete in all points. The former ocean is but seldom visited by those squalls and storms of thunder and lightning which are of common occurrence in the latter, particularly in the neighbourhood of the west coast of Africa; neither are the formidable waterspouts, which have already been described as frequently appearing in the same quarter, to be often observed in the Indian seas, where nearly all the atmospherical phenomena of the torrid zone are mild in their character, and where the winds, the temperature, and the currents, are subject to little irregularity throughout the year. But though possessing these advantages, this ocean is one of the most solitary in the world, at least in so far as respects the visibleness of its inhabitants. The voyager will traverse it for days in succession without seeing any animated beings whatever; and when such do appear, it is generally under the form of the shy and snow-white tropic-bird, soaring far above the vanes at the mast-head, and often

remaining poised in the air like a small fragment of cloud; or of the great black peterel, which wheels continually round the ship, without ever approaching within several hundred yards of her; or of the flying-fish, which shoots across the waves and quickly disappears; or of the whale, evolving its dark-coloured back upon the surface of the water like a crescent, and in a few moments withdrawing itself from the view.

But if the Indian Ocean generally wants animation during the day, it often presents a scene of redeeming splendour at night; for nowhere is that beautiful phenomenon, the phosphorescence of the sea, to be observed in such brilliancy or under so great a variety of forms. When the wind blows fresh, the waves are crested with long serpentine wreaths of fire, and the ship is surrounded with concentric luminous zones, and seems to be forcing her way through a burning flood. Sometimes starry lights and comet-shaped bodies gleam in her track, and sometimes a sudden and continuous blaze illuminates a considerable portion of the sea around her, and the eye is never weary of watching the changeful glories of this nocturnal exhibition, which is observable in a

partial degree in the calmest weather; for then every fish that happens to be swimming within a few yards of the surface of the water is surrounded by a luminousness which distinctly marks its course, and even indicates its size and form.

The phosphorescence of the ocean is a subject which has long engaged the attention of naturalists, and various causes have been assigned in explanation of it. Some insist that it depends upon electricity; while others ascribe it to the diffusion of animalculæ capable of emitting light. The first theory appears quite untenable; and the second may be considered to be so likewise, except when it is applied to those instances of frequent occurrence and above described, in which the sea presents a variety of starry and defined luminous forms. These are evidently produced by zoophytes, holothuriæ, and medusæ; but that general phosphorescence of the waters of the ocean, which exists in a greater or less degree at all times and in all latitudes, and which wears the appearance of innumerable sparkling points, has been satisfactorily proved by Bory St. Vincent to arise from the vast quantity of putrified animal substances which are diffused throughout the body of the

ocean, and which emit a phosphorescence when agitated either by the breaking of the waves or by the passing of a ship. The phosphorescence is always greatest in the neighbourhood of the equator, because animal decomposition goes faster on there than in temperate or cold regions; but it is impossible to doubt that it does go on everywhere, and that it is capable of producing the effect in question; while, on the other hand, the existence of phosphorescent animalculæ has in most instances been assumed without any evidence; for sea-water, in a high state of luminousness, it is well known, is often found to be absolutely destitute of any inhabitants of the kind.

The shells inhabiting the Indian Ocean have long been celebrated for their beauty and elegance, and for the splendour of their colours. The cypreæ and the volutæ abound on the shores of the Isles of France and Bourbon; but the neighbourhood of Ceylon is above all other places in the world a repository for everything that is rare and exquisite in conchology. Either owing to the general tranquillity of the ocean there, or to the nature of its bottom, the shells, whatever their species may be, surpass in tint and in developement those found anywhere else,

and are sought and prized by collectors accordingly. Even the pearls obtained in the Indian Ocean partake of the superiority of her other productions; and the banks where they are bred in the Gulf of Manaar, have always yielded an immense revenue to the different nations to which they have at different times belonged. The pearl is one of those productions of nature which require for their formation a concurrence of circumstances so complicated and obscure as to elude our narrowest scrutiny and most continued observation. The oyster itself is very generally diffused over the globe; but it is only in the Gulf of Manaar, in the Bay of Ormus, in the Persian Gulf, in the Gulf of Venezuela, and in the Gulf of St. Miguel, that it generates pearls of magnitude and beauty; for opaque, and, as it were, abortive concretions of the kind, are to be met with in the oysters of all regions, and even in fresh-water shell-fish. A view of the situation and nature of the places above mentioned authorizes us to conclude that a tropical climate and a sheltered sea are requisite for the production of genuine pearls; for, of the four gulfs, three lie within ten degrees of the equator; and the other, that of Ormus, though beyond the tropic, is cele-

brated as being one of the hottest places in the world. But observation does not enable us to decide what additional circumstances must combine for the accomplishment of the effect in question. As only a small proportion of the oysters collected in even the most favourable situations are found to contain pearls, it has been supposed that they are excrescences produced by a disease in the fish; and one individual, in admitting this, asserted that it was caused by a small worm perforating the shell, and that by keeping oysters in reservoirs, and boring them artificially, we might force them to generate pearls — a theory which, unfortunately, was not confirmed by experience. The defined locality of the pearl oyster, and the peculiar properties of the animal itself, are analogous to what has already been related of the poisonous fishes of the West Indian Ocean; and we can as little explain the operations of Nature in the one case as in the other, though we may feel equally desirous of being able to do so in both, in order that we might promote the work of elegance and beauty in the former instance, and prevent the destruction of human life in the latter.

I have just remarked, that the Indian Ocean

contains but few islands in proportion to its extent; nor are any of these of considerable size; but the difference in their structure and physical aspect is equally striking and singular. In the Isles of France, and Bourbon, and Rodrigues, but particularly in the two latter, we trace the action of recently extinct volcanoes, and observe in many places streams of lava, deep craters, and scorched plains; while barren mountains and rocky precipices everywhere rise to a considerable height, and invest Nature with a stern and sublime character. On the other hand, the islands composing the Maldive and Laccadive archipelagoes are universally almost level with the surface of the sea, and of the tamest possible aspect, and consist altogether of coral reefs, and exhibit the action of water instead of that of fire. Bourbon and its neighbours appear to have been forced out of the ocean by the most violent and sudden of Nature's agents — subterranean fire; while the Maldives and Laccadives owe their formation to the slowest and least obtrusive of these — the labours of marine animalculæ.

Perhaps of all the agents that are gradually and silently effecting changes upon the surface of our planet, the most universal and important

is the insect which produces coral. The South Pacific and the Indian Oceans, and the Arabian Gulf, present us with various examples of its stupendous powers; and others are daily making their appearance upon the surface of the sea, in the shape of reefs and islands, which bewilder and impede the navigator; who, guided by the charts of his predecessors, is astonished to encounter shallows and soundings, and even dry land, and trees, and animals, and human beings, in places where he expected to find nothing but fathomless depths and an unbroken horizon. If we reflect that coral islands are often discovered in isolated masses in the deepest parts of the ocean, we shall obtain some faint idea of the vast quantity of material which enters into their structure, and of the magnitude of the labours of those insects which are the instruments of their formation. The coral island must have its foundation in the bottom of the ocean, from whence the little molluscous architects must raise it in successive layers till it reaches the surface of the waves, even should the depth be thousands of feet or fathoms. What an insignificant proportion then must the visible extent of any coralline archipelago bear to the mass of matter which lies concealed under

water, and forms its basis and foundation! And it is well worthy of remark, that the insects in question seem to observe a kind of economy in their architecture, and never make the inferior part of their structures broader, or perhaps so broad, as their upper surface is intended to be; for deep water is almost always found at the edge of a coral reef; which proves that it does not rise from its foundation in the shape of a pyramid, but that it is actually from top to bottom a vast pillar or column of the same thickness. Péron, a French nautical man, has even supposed that coral islands are sometimes raised upon slender stalks, which bear no greater proportion to the extent of their surface, than the stem of a mushroom does to the circumference of the vegetable growing upon it; and that when a violent tempest occurs, the stroke of the waves may break the coral pillar, and occasion the instantaneous submersion of the island which it supported. In this way we may explain how navigators have often searched in vain for reefs, shallows, and breakers, which had been observed and reported to exist by their predecessors.

The coral structure having been raised to a level with the surface of the ocean, the molluscæ

necessarily suspend their labours, because it is only under water that they can carry these on. But, nevertheless, the still half submerged island acquires in the course of time an increase of elevation from other sources. Shells, and seaweed, and various marine exuviæ, are detained and entangled by its rugged surface, which gradually becomes fit to support vegetation. The cocoa-nut, which, owing to its buoyancy and its protecting shell, is of all other fruits or seeds the best able to float long upon the waves without injury to its powers of germination, is soon accidentally thrown upon the coral island, where it sows itself, and becomes a tree. It seems very certain, at least, that the palm species appears upon recently emerged lands within the tropics before any other form of vegetation, and that it can exist and flourish in places where no other plant would grow; and, as it abounds upon most of the islands and coasts of the torrid zone, the extensive dispersion of its fruits by the waves is a thing that must necessarily happen. Sir George Staunton, in describing his voyage in the Eastern Ocean, says, "The coral rocks above the surface on which vegetation flourished were many of them so small as to contain each only a single stem, like

a vessel's mast, the whole of them presenting to a distant view the appearance of several fleets of shipping."

But in admitting that the palm-trees which first appear on emerging coral islands have in most cases derived their existence from nuts borne thither by the winds and waves, I am far from believing that the same kind of plants would not in due time be produced upon the spots in question without foreign assistance. The most superficial acquaintance with the geographical distribution of vegetables, is sufficient to convince us that they have not been diffused over the world from one common centre; and that every tract of country that emerges from the ocean does not depend for its supply of plants upon the accidental circumstance of their seeds being conveyed to it by currents, or by birds, or even by the winds, as is still very generally supposed. A mode of production so uncertain, clumsy, and imperfect, is inconsistent with reason, philosophy, and human observation; and we are fully warranted in believing that every island, whether great or small, or whether in the neighbourhood of other regions or far remote from them, contains within its own soil (that is to say, when it does possess

one,) the elements and instruments of vegetation, and that it will in due time be covered with plants of natural and spontaneous growth, and of a kind suitable and congenial to its climate. We can account for the extraordinary and pertinacious locality of many species of plants, only by supposing that particular soils are capable of evolving particular vegetable forms *ab origine*, or without the intervention of seeds.

The purest granite rock, reduced to powder, and carefully preserved from any possible vegetable mixture, would doubtless, after being for a greater or less period of time exposed to the action of the air, produce some of the plants of the country in which the experiment was tried, or others similar to them. If all vegetables were produced at one common centre, and from thence gradually diffused over the world, how happens it that we cannot trace their course and progress from one country to another, instead of finding many species of them isolated, as it were, in remote quarters of the globe, and utterly unknown anywhere else? The cactus exists in equinoctial America only; the breadfruit-tree has never been observed except in the islands of the South Pa-

cific Ocean. The *protea argentea* is peculiar to the southern promontory of the Cape of Good Hope. The clove and nutmeg trees are as decidedly indigenous to the Molucca archipelago as the tea-plant is to China. In short, no connexion whatever can be traced between the vegetable productions of different countries, except what may be supposed to depend upon the similarity of the climates in which they respectively grow; and almost every unknown land which we have an opportunity of exploring, is found to contain plants of a species never observed anywhere else, and strictly indigenous to the soil. It seems probable, indeed, that new species of plants are daily coming into existence, and that there are no limits to the subordinate variations of form that occur in the vegetable world. Forty years ago, the number of plants described by botanists did not exceed twenty-five thousand, but at present it amounts to upwards of fifty-six thousand; an increase arising not more perhaps from the persevering researches of modern travellers, than from that developement of new vegetable forms which appears to be continually going on in all parts of the world, and particularly in the equinoctial regions.

Though we now possess a tolerably accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the operations and productions of Nature, we are still totally unacquainted with the extent of her powers in the formation of vegetables and animals, or whether any of the higher orders of the latter are ever brought into existence without the intervention of other individuals of the same or of a similar species. The history of an isolated and solitary coral island in the Indian or the Pacific Ocean, from the period of its first emerging above the surface of the sea, till it has become covered with various species of plants, and peopled by different animals, would afford us the desired insight into the physical capabilities of the globe. But as this history cannot be obtained at present, and as it could not be executed at any time without the concurrence of successive generations of men, (an improbable circumstance,) we must rest satisfied with what analogy and conjecture may furnish in reference to the subject. I have above remarked, that we may reasonably believe that every soil contains within itself the elements of vegetation, and is capable of producing plants, though neither their seeds nor shoots may ever have been deposited in it; and I am

inclined to suspect that animals also are often generated in places where none of their species have before appeared or existed. It is probable that the principle of organization, after passing through a series of the simpler forms of existence, acquires a degree of intensity and perfection which enables it to develope itself under those characters which belong to the higher orders of quadrupeds. It is well known that we can at pleasure produce those living forms called *infusoria*, by the admixture of particular substances, and that we can even choose which species of them we shall bring into existence. Here then we have an evolution of animal life from vegetable substances, without the intervention of other animals. The *infusoria* are unquestionably living and intelligent beings; and it is perfectly possible that we might by some particular process, such as Nature may constantly be carrying on, improve their organization to such a degree, as gradually to raise them higher in the scale of animals, and to cause their developement into a superior and more perfect form of existence. We are almost forced to come to some conclusion of this kind, when we seek to discover how solitary islands, of recent coral formation, and situated in the

middle of a vast ocean, have been provided with animal inhabitants. A thousand accidents may convey men to such places, however unexperienced they may be in the art of navigation; but the vulgar and commonly received opinion that animals are supplied in a similar way, is utterly untenable in two-thirds of the instances in which it is adopted.

The navigator, who finds deer, foxes, squirrels, mice, &c. in a desert isle, one thousand miles distant from any other land, great or small, may, to spare himself the trouble of reflection or inquiry, pronounce that they came from the nearest continent; but this assertion will not satisfy the naturalist, who is well aware that no land animals of any description are in the habit of quitting their native soil, and plunging into the wide ocean, and undertaking voyages of discovery. In dry seasons, in South Africa, the spring-boks are often forced by want of pasture to desert their usual haunts, and to wander in various directions near the coast, hundreds perishing of hunger by the way; yet in that extremity the survivors never either swim across the Mozambique Channel to Madagascar, or attempt to reach St. Helena. The emigration of quadrupeds by water is in direct opposition to

the laws of Nature; nor is there a single instance on record of land animals of any kind being observed in the open sea, long and often as it has been traversed; and it is scarcely necessary to allude to the impossibility of their living many hours in a situation of the kind, however buoyant and expert they may be in the act of swimming. And if we admit that every island, however isolated and detached, has derived its animal inhabitants from the regions nearest adjoining it, how shall we account for the existence in particular places of quadrupeds that are found nowhere else? Some persons may suppose it possible that New Holland was first supplied with animals from New Guinea, or from Java, neither of which are far distant from her shores; but from what country did she obtain the kangaroo, and the ornothoryncus paradoxus, which are utterly unknown in every other part of the world? The ornothoryncus, exhibiting the bill and webbed foot of the duck engrafted upon the body of the beaver, is perhaps the most distinctly local of all animated beings; and as no region but one produces it, or even anything in the remotest degree resembling it, we are forced to believe that it first came into existence upon that soil where it is

now found; and that it, or any other varieties of animal form, may come into existence again in the most remote, isolated, and inaccessible spots, whenever particular, but to us unknown, circumstances concur to favour their production and developement.

Navigators, in visiting detached islands, or groups of islands, occasionally observe that their inhabitants are distinguished by some physical peculiarity from any neighbouring people; and they find themselves at a loss to explain the cause of a thing, which perhaps depends upon some antecedent circumstances of no very distant date, and of a nature not likely to be suspected. The obscure island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, will most likely be found to contain a singular race of people by any European ship that may happen to touch there, owing to the two following occurrences, the last of which can be known to very few individuals now alive. Towards the end of the last century, the French, then in possession of the Mauritius, on several occasions, sent the leprous slaves of that colony to the island of Diego Garcia, both in order to prevent the disease being communicated to others, and to afford those affected with it the means of living entirely

upon turtle; a kind of diet which is reputed to be very efficacious in restoring such persons to health. At this time an English merchant brig was driven by strong gales close to Diego Garcia, and came to anchor within a small distance of it. She was manned chiefly with Lascars, or Indian sailors; and when the weather had moderated, she sent a boat on shore for water, and two of them were despatched into the interior of the island in search of a spring. In the course of their ramble they fell in with a small colony of lepers, consisting of eight or ten persons, both male and female, and spent a little time amongst them, and then returned to the boat and related their adventure. No sooner was the master of the brig informed of it, than apprehensive of leprous contagion, he positively refused to take the Lascars on board, and they were carried back into the island by force, and left there, while he pursued his voyage, and never saw or heard more of them. I learned these particulars at the Cape of Good Hope, from the individual who was first officer of the vessel at the time that this occurred, (about 1792;) and it is probable that no European has since visited the island, which is surrounded by dangerous reefs, and quite out of the usual

track of ships. The progeny arising from the intercourse of the Madagascar and Mozambique slaves, and the two natives of Hindostan, would in all likelihood present some singularities of feature and form; but when it is considered in addition that leprosy renders white the skin of black or swarthy people, and that this peculiarity is communicated, though in an inferior degree, to their children, it is easy to conceive that the present population of Diego Garcia (if it really has any) must wear a singular physical aspect, and must differ very materially from that of the other islands in the Indian Ocean.

# GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF INDIA.

In reading descriptions of the effect which tropical scenery exercises upon the imagination of an European, it is particularly necessary to pay attention to the circumstances in which the writers of them were placed; otherwise they will, to all appearance, be alike contradictory and inconsistent in their tenor and character. The casual visiter of the torrid zone, and the individual who has been long resident there, will never be found to coincide in their opinions respecting the climate, and the face of Nature, in the vicinity of the equator; nor does this depend, as we might at first suppose, upon the influence of the novelty of the objects in the one case, and of a familiarity with them in the other; but it has a deeper and more obscure origin, and is doubtless connected with the in-

sidious operation of a long-continued exposure to a high degree of temperature upon the organs and constitution of those who have been accustomed to a cold climate.

An European traveller, visiting for the first time any of the fertile and favoured regions of the torrid zone, is dazzled and enchanted by the brilliancy of colouring and variety of form which the animal and vegetable worlds assume there. He contemplates by turns the heavens, the earth, and the ocean, and feels at a loss whether most to admire the serenity of the first, the rich and motley garb of the second, or the tranquil and resplendent expanse of the latter. During the day, his attention is arrested by the gigantic palm-trees, which he observes growing in groups close to the sea-shore, or rising in solitary elegance far above the level of the forests in the interior of the country — by the banana, whose long and dependent leaves of a vivid green float in the breeze like streamers — by the stately mango, dark and dense in its foliage, and studded with golden fruit — by the leafless euphorbium, composed of a thick, short, and prickly stem, which, projecting a foot or two above the ground, sends forth regularly-curved and divergent branches, exactly

similar to those of a candelabra — and by the lianas, or creepers of various kinds, which hang from the boughs of the trees like cordage, or, interlacing together, form a kind of net-work between their neighbouring trunks. No sooner has night veiled in obscurity the vegetable creation, than myriads of fire-flies animate the scene; while the ocean, as if emulous of their beauty and brightness, becomes covered with luminous points and streaks. In the cloudless sky overhead are seen blazing the resplendent constellations of the northern and southern hemispheres; and at short intervals, shooting stars appear to travel through the remotest depths of the heavens.

But after a few years' residence within the tropics such scenes lose their interest, and are viewed with indifference, and even dislike. The waving of the palm-tree assumes a melancholic character; and the monotonous murmuring of the surf upon the beach is a sound of gloom and despondency. The annual setting in of the rains, at a time when the barren earth refuses to nourish a blade of grass and the leaves of the trees are coated with dust, is felt to be gratifying only because it lowers the temperature of the climate, and not because it is a

signal for the revival of vegetation, and the adornment of the face of the earth. Those sensations of "vernal delight and joy," and that serenity of spirit, which certain aspects of Nature in temperate regions seldom fail to excite in the mind of an European, are unknown to him in the torrid zone; the splendid and imposing imagery of which fails to address itself to the heart, or awaken those secret sympathies which exist between the human soul and the finer forms of inanimate nature. Nor are influences of this kind ever experienced by the Asiatics themselves, or by the natives of any tropical regions whatever. In the poetry of Hindostan, though we find numerous descriptions of the aspects of Nature, and of the various forms which she presents, we never meet with any of those allusions to her more refined power upon the imagination, that continually occur in the writings of Europeans, and have been personally experienced by most persons of sensibility and cultivated taste in that quarter of the globe. Wordsworth will for ever be unintelligible to the natives of the torrid zone, whether they be inhabitants of Asia, Africa, or South America; while Europeans, residing in any of the tropical parts of these three countries, will al-

ways find his sentiments and analogies uncongenial and inapplicable to the character of the material world around them. Is this mental peculiarity dependent upon the physical operation of warm climates upon the human constitution? And here it is well worthy of remark, that neither the Hindoos nor the Chinese have ever been able to make any progress in the art of landscape-painting, or even to comprehend the rules of perspective, or perceive their propriety or usefulness; while at the same time the chiaro scuro is equally little relished and understood by them. This has been ascribed (as I shall shortly have occasion more fully to state) to a disorder in the visual organs, produced by the glare of the sun; and as Europeans probably are liable to be affected in a similar way, after a long residence in the torrid zone, we may suppose that the cause of the defective conceptions of landscape beauty has a strong affinity in the two cases.

The aspect of India, when approached from seaward, is neither impressive nor calculated to excite any favourable expectations of the general beauty of the country. All its coasts, whether those of Malabar, or of Coromandel, or of the Bay of Bengal, are flat and low, and unen-

livened by general cultivation; while the sandy beaches, and groves of palm-trees which border them, impart a monotonous uniformity to the scene. The chains of mountains which extend along the Malabar and the Coromandel coasts, lie on an average twenty or thirty miles inland, and are consequently too distant to enter effectively into the prospect.

The shores of India, except near the mouths of the Ganges and Indus, are of safe navigation in the fair season, and almost entirely free from hidden dangers; but they are scantily provided with harbours, either good or bad; and all the rivers, like those of other tropical regions, have sand-bars, which render them inaccessible to vessels of burthen. It is singular, that a country whose productions have from the remotest times been coveted by all nations, and which are now dispersed over the whole civilized world, should possess only one secure and commodious haven, though its coasts have an extent of nearly three thousand miles; while northern Europe, Labrador, Newfoundland, and the north-west coast of America — regions condemned to perpetual sterility, and scarcely habitable by man, are everywhere indented by the finest bays and inlets, capable of affording shelter to the naviga-

tor in the most tempestuous weather of a naturally tempestuous climate.

No division of the world presents a greater variety of physical aspects than Hindostan. These are not regulated by parallels of latitude, but depend principally upon the elevation of the country, and its greater or less remoteness from the sea. The coasts are for the most part low, fertile, and thickly wooded, and, as may be supposed, unhealthy, wherever there is little or no cultivation. Being much intersected by rivers, whose inundations during the rainy season do not admit of the use of ferries or the construction of bridges, travelling is here difficult and dangerous; while at the same time the continuous forests render it monotonous and uninteresting. Towards the base of the mountain ranges, Nature assumes a more cheerful aspect; and agriculture, instead of being confined to the formation of rice-fields, displays a varied character, both with respect to grain and to vegetables. The valuable timbers of India are here seen in perfection. The teak-tree attains vast magnitude; the sandal and the wild cinnamon exhale their perfumes; the areca, esteemed for its aromatic nuts, raises its slender and graceful stem; and the banana, the citron, the pepper-

tree, and the mulberry combine to diversify the landscape. The ascent of the mountains occasions a striking change of scene; all now becomes wild, solitary, and sublime; and interminable thickets, profound and dark ravines, and fantastic-shaped rocky pinnacles, alternately engage the traveller's attention, while the increasing coolness and elasticity of the air inform him that he is about to enter a new climate. Beyond the mountains he finds an elevated country disposed in vast plateaux, some of which are populous, fertile, and well watered; while others present a dry and stony surface, destitute of vegetation during a great part of the year, and wearing a sombre and painful uniformity of appearance. Beyond these, in different directions, lie immense regions, varying widely in their physical character, and which it would be tedious to enumerate and minutely describe. Among the most remarkable of these are the tracts of country called jungles, which in many places extend hundreds of miles in length and breadth. Covered with stunted forests and long grass, they afford an asylum to wild beasts, and to tribes of uncivilized Indians, who lead a life half nomade and half predatory. A large part of the district named Cutch consists of saline

and sandy plains, but recently redeemed from the ocean, and which, being still liable to submersion, are alike sterile and uninhabitable. Guzerat, on the other hand, is an extensive territory, covered with beautiful clumps of trees, and producing grain and cattle in abundance, and watered by various streams, large and small; while the region called the Deckan, is unshaded even by a thicket or shrub of natural growth, parched by fiery winds, and seldom refreshed by heavy or continued rains. But through whatever quarter of India the traveller passes, he will be not less struck with the smallness of the population in proportion to the extent of country in which it is found, than with the immensity of the territory that remains unoccupied by man, and a great part of which must ever continue desolate and uncultivated, owing to the want of water, and various other causes. After making long journeys in different directions, and observing the general poverty of the people, and the solitary wildness of their country, he will be tempted to exclaim:—Is this the land which has for centuries supplied, and which still continues to supply, with costly manufactures, with beautiful fabrics, with spices, gold, and gems, the whole of the civilized world,

and for the carrying of whose productions mighty nations have always contended, because it has ever proved a source of prodigious wealth to the people who have enjoyed it? Where are the materials of luxury? Where are the artificers that prepare them? Here I see depopulated towns, an indigent peasantry, and few of the exteriors of grandeur even amongst the highest classes of society. Do the Hindoos then despise riches? or are they plundered of the profits of their labour and their commerce by a race of domineering foreigners, who drain them of their resources, and confer no benefit in return?

In temperate regions the aspect of Nature is varied and modified by lakes and rivers in a degree that seldom occurs in the torrid zone; where the rapid evaporation which is constantly going forward, prevents the accumulation of water in even the lowest grounds, and causes the streams, whatever their magnitude may be, to shrink as it were within their channels, except during three months of the year, when they are recruited by frequent rains. India is, generally speaking, a badly watered country, and various parts of it are uninhabitable on that account; and the eye of the traveller will in many places range over

an area of an hundred miles in circumference, without being able to discover a pond or a rivulet, or to perceive one spot where a bright verdure indicates the existence of either of them. The tanks or reservoirs constructed by the natives, and filled by the periodical rains, are indeed often so large as to deserve the name of little lakes; but they occur only in the vicinity of towns or populous villages, and have no effect in diminishing the aridity of the neighbouring soil. The natural lakes of Hindostan are exceedingly few in number, compared with the extent of the country; while, in magnitude, even the greatest of them, such as those of Chilka and Pulicate, fall infinitely short of the most inconsiderable ones of Northern Europe.

Nor has India any reason to boast much of her rivers; for the Ganges and Indus derive their celebrity more from their geographical position, and from the historical associations connected with them, than from their magnitude, navigableness, or beauty. Their waters are muddy, and their mouths are obstructed by sand-bars, and their channels disfigured and prodigiously widened by those periodical inundations to which all the rivers of tropical regions are more or less subject, and which cause

the formation of two sets of banks, the inner one confining the stream in the dry season, and the outer one forming its limits during the rainy months of the year. These inundations generally bestow fertility upon the country over which they extend, and are in many instances indispensable to agriculture; but they entirely destroy the beauty of the banks and channels which are exposed to their effects, and confer an aspect of desolation which at first startles the beholder. In some of the Asiatic rivers, such as the Indus and the Euphrates, the space between the inner and outer banks exceeds a mile in breadth. This remains exposed and dry during at least half of the year, and presents nothing but sand and stones, and perhaps a few tufts of reeds and grass; the time which intervenes between the periodical inundations being too short to admit of any generous vegetation taking place, except where the inhabitants may have planted green crops of rapid growth and early maturity. Hence, few of the great streams of tropical regions offer any scenes of tranquil beauty within a vast distance of their mouths, their banks being almost everywhere else excavated and disrupted, and their half-dry channels covered with

rubbish, sand, and fallen trees. It is only after advancing five or six hundred miles up the Ganges, where its inundations are inconsiderable, that we observe those transparent and foaming waters, those umbrageous forests growing upon the edge of the stream, and those flowery and enchanting solitudes, amidst which the Vanaprasta and Sannayasa, Brahmans, and sages of former times, used to devote themselves to an ascetic life, and seek for early absorption into the divine essence. Nevertheless, it is only in temperate latitudes that we shall meet with that varied, noble, and impressive river scenery which forms so fine a trait in the physical physiognomy of our globe; for since the floods which occur in cold regions are seldom so violent or so long in duration as to devastate the banks where they take place, these become the seat of a mature and characteristic vegetation, which embellishes the stream at all seasons, and is never liable to be destroyed. If it be here objected that the smooth, level, and cultivated borders of the Nile throughout Lower Egypt invalidate my remarks in reference to the broken and desolate aspect of the banks of all rivers subject to periodical inundations, I have to reply, that the ground on the

sides of the Nile is artificial; and that the ancient inhabitants of the country, by filling up cavities and excavations, and levelling one spot and raising another, at length bestowed upon the banks of the river that gentle slope, and that continuity of surface, over which the most impetuous torrents will rush without breaking the soil or leaving a furrow. Herodotus informs us, that in the reign of Anysis, Sabacus king of Ethiopia conquered Egypt, and ruled over it fifty years. He punished no man with death, whatever his offences might be, but employed criminals in raising the ground in the neighbourhood of their dwellings; and a great part of Egypt was in this way rendered dry and habitable.

If the rivers of India are not remarkable for beauty, Nature has given the country an equivalent in the loveliness and grandeur of her mountains. Two long chains of these extend along the opposite coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, and have an average height of four thousand feet above the level of the sea; and their steepness is in general so great, that they can be passed at only a few places, which have been rendered accessible chiefly by human labour, and are named Ghauts; though that ap-

pellation is often improperly bestowed upon the mountain ranges themselves. The base of these is almost everywhere covered with lofty forests, and with the varied and luxuriant vegetation of the torrid zone; while, as has already been remarked, the choicest and most valuable natural productions of India find there a congenial soil, and are cultivated with success. Amidst the defiles of the more elevated regions, the most enchanting prospects and the most surprising combinations of scenery abound. At one time the traveller will pursue his way along the narrow summit of a lofty and spine-shaped ridge, crowned with trembling palms, and winding with gigantic curves through the middle of a deep and extensive valley; at another, he will find himself bewildered amongst naked and isolated masses of granite, which close the prospect on every side, and produce a concentrated gloom in their neighbourhood by the mightiness and density of their shadows. And on a third occasion, after having long followed a narrow pathway between two walls of rock, he will unexpectedly reach its termination near the top of a mountain, and see stretched far beneath him a fertile plain, embellished with a silvery tank, having near it a grove of mango-trees, in

the midst of which rise the minarets of a pagoda; while, in the direction of the mountain range, crowds of rocky pinnacles appear in perspective, the nearer groups mellowed by the rising or setting sun, and the remoter ones fading into each other, and dimly commingling their outlines in azure obscurity.

Nothing is more remarkable in the physical aspect of Hindostan than the total exemption which it presents from all the more violent and devastating convulsions of Nature. The torrid zone has generally been considered the proper and peculiar sphere of these, at least in their most powerful form; but the soil of India is nowhere liable to be scorched by volcanoes, or disrupted by earthquakes, or submerged by overflowings of the sea. Nor does history or tradition indicate that accidents of the kind have ever occurred in the country; and a geological examination of its surface corroborates this negative evidence. The vast peninsula, in whatever manner it may be contemplated, always preserves an attitude of sublime repose, like what we see continually repeated in the statues of its guardian deity, Bramha, or Boodh; and perhaps no region in the world offers fewer data for the construction of geolo-

gical theories, or speaks more obscurely to the senses of those naturalists who love to point out the alterations which they suppose to have taken place upon the surface of our planet. Nor is the atmosphere of Hindostan less tranquil than her territories; for it is never disturbed by hurricanes like those that rage in the West Indies, nor by typhoons such as occur upon the coasts of China; and seldom experiences even the tempests and gales of wind which are common in almost every other country during at least one season of the year.

To describe, even in the most concise style, the various productions of India, agricultural and commercial, would be to fill a volume; while, on the other hand, a simple enumeration of their names would communicate neither amusement nor instruction. Suffice it then to say, that the country, besides affording within itself everything necessary for the subsistence, convenience, and luxury of its millions of inhabitants, yields, or could be made to yield, in addition, a sufficient quantity of silk, cotton, spices, sugar, dyes, coffee, oil, rice, sandal-wood, varnish, and pearls, to supply the present consumption of the whole civilized world; besides a vast variety of exquisite and costly manufac-

tures, whether useful or ornamental. But Nature has above all things favoured and blest India in denying her any mines of the precious metals. Hence the grand mass of the people have always devoted their time to agriculture; and have on that account been enabled to preserve amongst themselves, unimpaired, for a vast succession of ages, that simplicity of manners and character, that moderation of temper, and that indestructible attachment to their country and to their institutions, of which they afford so admirable an example, and to which they owe the profound tranquillity which they have always enjoyed, except when harassed by foreign invaders. An immense proportion of Hindostan remains uncultivated and unpeopled; and, bearing this in mind, we shall more easily be able to conceive how rich and fertile many of the other parts of the country must be; since, notwithstanding the natural indolence of the people, these produce a surplus of precious commodities, the exportation of which annually employs several hundred thousand tons of European shipping. I will conclude these remarks by quoting a paragraph on the subject by Collin de Bar, a French historian.

"Such is the fertility of the soil in India,

that the trees bear fruit twice a year; and such is the perfection of the system of agriculture there, that three ordinary harvests are sometimes reaped within the same period; while in several provinces renovation and reproduction are carried so far, as to give even five crops in two years; an advantage which is attributable not only to the mode of tillage, but also to the effects of a genial climate, in which the sun, parent of vegetation, continually diffuses a fertilizing warmth. Nature there enjoys an incessant activity; nor can her energy be checked by any of those malignant agents which reduce the earth to sterility, and cover it with ruins. In vain, during a series of ages, have oppression, barbarism, bigotry, massacres, and famine, whether the consequences of war and of bad government, or the effect of monopoly and avarice, attended the steps of the conquerors who have devastated India. All these calamities united have proved inadequate to despoil the pacific Hindoo of the vast advantages which bountiful Nature has lavished around him."

The opinion which an European forms of any climate is more generally the result of his personal sensations, than of any inquiry into the influence which it exerts upon others; hence

travellers do not agree in their statements respecting the temperature and atmospherical character of the torrid zone. Some represent the climate of India as being one of the happiest in the world, because the sky is serene and cloudless during three-fourths of the year, and because the vegetating powers of Nature never suffer any suspension; while others describe the almost perpetual sunshine as monotonous and oppressive, and consider the want of an annual winter to be the want of a source of enjoyment. But nearly all Europeans who visit India find the average heat to be much less than what they expected; and as many of them scarcely ever suffer any sensible inconvenience from it, we must refer the malignant operation of tropical climates upon the human system to other and more obscure causes than their high temperature.

The character of the climate of India is so much modified by different local and accidental causes, that a foreigner's impressions respecting it are liable to vary as often as he changes his place of residence. In those parts of the country where woods and groves abound, where a continual supply of water admits of general irrigation, and where gardens encompass every

dwelling, and green fields destroy the glare of the sun, the climate is neither oppressive nor uninviting during the greater part of the year; and the mind enjoys a state of tranquil serenity, insensible to the monotonousness of Nature's operations, and satisfied with the objects which fall within the range of its observation; but, on the other hand, in those sterile plains which are strewed with grey stones, and diversified only by a few naked and rocky hills, and which are annually visited by hot winds of several months' duration, the climate of Hindostan assumes a horrid and repulsive character, and seems to exert a hostility to animal and vegetable life, instead of being, as it generally speaking is, the prolific parent and successful nurse of both. But let the European reside in the most fertile and favoured regions of Hindostan, let him enjoy uninterrupted health, and let him have the command of all possible means of alleviating the heat, still he will not, even after the longest residence, become entirely reconciled and assimilated to the climate, unless his mind and character adapt themselves to it as well as his constitution. It has always appeared to me, that the inconvenience which the native of northern regions at first experiences from the

influence of tropical climates, has less connexion with his body than with his mental peculiarities. It is not the sensation of heat that oppresses him, but the sensation of personal restraint and abridged liberty of action. Accustomed in his own country to be continually in motion, to go abroad at all hours, to pass from one place to another, and to engage in various active pursuits, he finds, on arriving in the torrid zone, that things of the kind are impracticable, and that to preserve his health and his life he must altogether renounce them. Irritation and *ennui* ensue, unless his internal resources are very considerable; and his constitution suffers more from the state of his mind than from the heat of the climate. The Hindoo, to whom the high temperature of India is perfectly congenial, owes his exemption from its ill effects upon foreigners, less to his having been born and reared in the vicinity of the equator, than to his sedateness of character, his moderate desires, and his aversion to business and active pursuits. He passes most of the day in contemplative ease, and in a sitting posture, and seldom suffers himself to be hurried or disturbed; while, on the other hand, the European lives in the midst of business, and ceases to

value existence whenever he ceases to have some source of excitement or annoyance.

How can it be explained, that in the torrid zone everything should attain superior perfection and developement except the human mind, which there appears to be enfeebled by those very influences which more or less invigorate all the forms and powers of Nature? Nowhere does the vegetable world assume so magnificent, so varied, and so brilliant an aspect. The palm rises to the height of one hundred and fifty feet; the trunk of the adansonia is sometimes found to be half as much in circumference; the bark of many trees exudes precious gums and fragrant perfumes; the blossoms of others produce spices and ambrosial nuts; the most splendid fructification crowns the commonest plants; the flowers of the rafflesia expand to a diameter of three feet; the very weeds possess valuable medical properties; and, in short, a perpetual and luxuriant verdure exists throughout the year. Nor is the favouring influence of the torrid zone less perceptible in the animal creation which inhabits it; for the elephant, the camelopard, the lion, the royal tiger, and the camel, combining amongst

them bulk, intelligence, beauty, strength, and usefulness, are found only within its limits, or nearly so: while the seas abound with resplendent shells and corals, and mature into perfection the pearls of Ceylon and the purple-dying murex of Nicoya. Many of the rivers of equatorial countries roll gold; and the mountains enclose mines of that metal, and are traversed with ramifications of silver ore, which are the richer the deeper they lie under the surface of the earth; and in similar regions are procured all the gems and precious stones that shine at the courts and in the palaces of sovereigns, in whatever part of the world their kingdoms may be situated.

But under the torrid zone the character and powers of our species partake of neither the splendour nor the developement which there belong to the productions of the soil, whether animate or inanimate. The more brilliant exhibitions of human genius, and the grander efforts of human industry, have always taken place in colder regions; and a high degree of temperature seems to have the effect of rarefying the faculties of man as well as the atmosphere which surrounds him, so that they be-

come too much attenuated to support an accumulation of powerful ideas; in the same manner as the air, after undergoing great expansion, can no longer bear up the bird or the balloon, which would float upon it without difficulty were it in a state of medium density. It is very certain that there is no instance of any individual of great genius being born within the tropics, and that the most civilized nations there never advance beyond a certain pitch of knowledge and refinement. And while we may believe that they have no reason to regret this, in so far as their general happiness is concerned, we shall nevertheless feel a strong curiosity to discover the cause of the moral phenomenon itself; which has been ascribed by turns to the natural indolence of the natives of hot climates, to the facility with which they procure the means of subsistence, to their want of mental and physical energy, and to their indifference to a high degree of political freedom. All these four causes may operate in a greater or less degree in producing the effect in question; but it appears to me that a fifth one acts more powerfully and decidedly in that way than any of them: I mean a theocratic form

of government, which seems to be a natural and indispensable accompaniment of civilization in tropical climates, whether in Asia, Africa, or America. In the first-mentioned country, the Hindoos afford a striking example of the kind; and also the Turks, who, though not ostensibly in subjection to the priesthood, found all their laws and institutions upon the precepts of the Koran. Africa, again, furnishes us with an instance of theocracy in the ancient Egyptians; and directing our view towards America, we find that both the Mexicans and Peruvians were governed in a similar way at the time that the Spaniards invaded their territories. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the effect of a *theocratic* government has always been to advance nations to a certain degree of civilization only, and to keep them stationary there; and we may thus explain why the inhabitants of tropical regions have never attained a high state of intelligence and refinement: but this does not solve the point in question, because we are again led to ask how it happens that a theocracy should prevail so universally amongst them, and be so well adapted to their character and habits of mind? Is it because their natural

indolence makes them dislike the trouble of reasoning and reflecting, and induces them to throw that upon the priesthood? for whoever unreservedly submits himself to their guidance in any country whatever has no farther occasion to use his faculties, and, strictly speaking, has no right to do anything but to hear and to obey.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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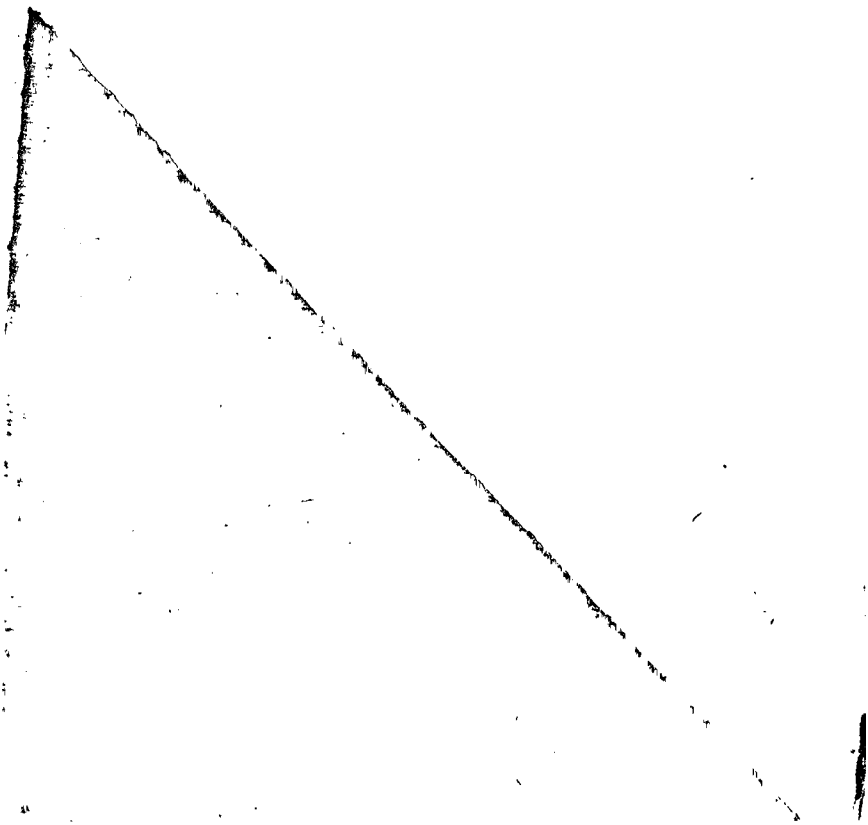

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